EXCHANGE
JUN 2 1933

The ARYAN PATH

Vol. III. FEBRUARY 1932 No. 2.

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THEOSOPHY CO. (INDIA), LTD.,
51, Esplanade Road, - - BOMBAY, INDIA.

THE ARYAN PATH

ADDRESS:

51, Esplanade Road, Bombay, India.

PUBLISHERS:—Theosophy Co. (India), Ltd.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:—No subscriptions are accepted for less than six months, but subscriptions may begin with any desired number. All subscriptions, orders for single and back numbers, and back volumes, bound or unbound, should be accompanied by the necessary remittance to the Manager, THE ARYAN PATH. Price: In India, single copy Re. 1; per annum Rs. 10. In Europe, single copy 2s. 6d.; per annum £1 or equivalent. In America single copy 50 cents; per annum $5; post free.

CONTRIBUTIONS:—Contributions submitted for publication should be typewritten, on one side of the paper only, with wide margin, and copies should be in all cases retained by the writers, as no manuscripts are returned. The Editors hold themselves responsible for unsigned articles only. They are not necessarily in agreement with the views of their contributors to whom they leave free expression of opinion.

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(*b*) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and a demonstration of the importance of such study; and

(*c*) The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

ॐ

Unveil, O Thou who givest sustenance to the world, that face of the true Sun, which is now hidden by a vase of golden light! so that we may see the truth and know our whole duty.

THE ARYAN PATH

VOL. III FEBRUARY 1932 No. 2

TRUE ASCETICISM

Give up more than one personal habit, such as practised in social life, and adopt some few ascetic rules.—H. P. BLAVATSKY.

When Prince Siddhartha left his Queen and palace to seek Wisdom which would both explain and eliminate the woes of humanity, he went from school to school of ardent practitioners who were engaged in the same great quest. He came across that class of gaunt and mournful yogis, who regard the body as foe to the soul and therefore torture flesh and maim each limb, hoping "to baulk hell by self-kindled hells". In answer to the royal aspirant who enquired why they added ills to life which is so evil, they had no explanation to offer save that they had chosen that way; and in their turn asked—"speak, if thou knowest a way more excellent; if not, peace go with thee." It was before the Enlightenment; Gautama was not yet able to point the Royal Way—Raja-Yoga—but he felt that the Torturous Way—Hatha-Yoga—was wrong.

There is another class of false pietists of bewildered soul—those who have not the strength of will, the pluck to suffer, nor the courage to endure bodily chastisement, but who, nevertheless retire to convents and monasteries, ashrams and maths, where the power of flesh may not envelop them, where the senses may not encounter temptations.

Both these groups are far from the reality of the Second Birth.

In our own midst there are not a few who have freed themselves from the bondage of organized re-

ligions, but have not been trapped into materialistic agnosticism and atheism, and desire to seek the Way to Enlightenment. There are those who are trying to define the rules of the higher life under the title of a "new asceticism"; there are those also who are seeking a guru or a master in the highways and hedges—going to the West, or coming to the East. Some fancy that bodily training and breathing exercises will bring Wisdom, while others imagine that it matters not what one eats and drinks and says and does as long as inner aspiration is remembered and subjective peace is felt. Some seek visions and wonders; others despise them as not only worthless but meaningless, finding their satisfaction in the exercise of their own mental muscles. All such, however well-meaning, are "bewildered souls".

True asceticism belongs to the most ancient of sciences, the Kingly Science of Raja-Yoga. Raja-Yoga is the science of true æsthetics, the knowledge to be obtained through *higher* Feeling which is perceptive, vaguely called Intuition. Hatha-Yoga is the science of athletics, deals with bodily training at its best and with torturous control over bodily functions at its worst. The very first rule of that Kingly Science taught in the *Gita*, proclaimed by the Buddha, given in the *Voice of the Silence* is that the higher life is an inner process, and begins with an inner attitude.

If thou art told that to gain liberation thou hast to hate thy mother and disregard thy son; to disavow thy father and call him "householder"; for man and beast all pity to renounce—tell them their tongue is false.

Believe thou not that sitting in dark forests, in proud seclusion and apart from men; believe thou not that life on roots and plants, that thirst assuaged with snow from the great Range—believe thou not, O Devotee, that this will lead thee to the goal of final liberation.

Think not that breaking bone, that rending flesh and muscle, unites thee to thy "silent Self". Think not that when the sins of thy gross form are conquered, O Victim of thy Shadows, thy duty is accomplished by nature and by man.

The blessed ones have scorned to do so.

The teachings implied in the above piece of instruction should be fully applied.

Social life is not to be given up but only some personal habits practised in social life; not wholesale bodily asceticism is to be adopted but only some ascetic rules. The Divine Discipline taught in the *Gita* is "not to be attained by the man who eateth more than enough or too little, nor by him who hath a habit of sleeping much, nor by him who is given to overwatching". (vi. 16)

The principle of the higher life which leads to the Second Birth is this inner attitude and habit, from which outer deeds and behaviour naturally emanate. He who has purified his thoughts will find a clean tongue; he who speaks pure words will find his palate responding only to that sattvic food which the *Gita* defines, but not in terms of vegetarianism or meat-eating (*Gita* XVII-8). But consuming sattvic

food will not bring forth true words or kind ones; mere utterance of holy sentences will not enlighten the mind. From within without is the basic law, and true asceticism observes it to the full, in the letter and in the spirit.

There are two unpardonable sins in the hidden life against which true asceticism warns. Each aspirant must fortify himself against them, and they may well become pointers to what is to be abandoned and what is to be adopted. They are—Doubt and Hypocrisy.

The best way to overcome doubt is to be true to one's self. In these columns last month it was shown how the development of Conscience is the first step, and it is the Voice of Conscience which subdues the Voice of Flesh, and evokes the Voice of Spirit. The use of Conscience removes doubts. Doubts are little concerned with our *beliefs*; they attack our clear perceptions, our knowledge, our highest visions. It is well to doubt that which confuses our reason, which shocks our intelligence, or weakens our moral stamina. Doubt which awakens to action the lethargic man of blind-belief is to be prized, as Browning taught. But to doubt our own convictions which are rooted in our reason and founded on our calmest reflection or highest vision and which are the teachings of the Sages is to commit the unpardonable offence. The ascetic rules to be adopted by each must conform themselves to such inner convictions. Mere aping of habits of others, however high in evolution or holy in life, is the wrong way of asceticism and proves disastrous.

The sin of Society is hypocrisy. Pleasant but insincere speech; white lies; glossing over our acts which our own reason pronounces wrong and our own moral perception condemns; explaining away blunders of omission and sins of commission; the simulating of a charitable and kindly spirit; the gossipy condemnation of people behind their backs under the guise of fearless criticism; indulgence in questionable deeds saying that one must experience everything;—all such are acts of hypocrisy, corrode soul-life and open the gates of hell. Battle must be given to any such personal social habits if they abide in us. The dread of being called sanctimonious must be faced, and saintly ways of true sanity should neither be abandoned, nor masked. Virtue and moral hygiene are laughed at as "goody-goodyness," but those who aspire to soul-life must not be daunted by petty criticism. Prudence may be scorned as prudery, a sense of justice to one's self may be attacked as selfishness—but nevertheless the ascetic rules positively applied by individuals in society will change the tone of that society.

Jesus was an ascetic—he never doubted the power and potency of his own spiritual-soul, his "father in heaven". And he was not a hypocrite; that is why he did not fear to break bread with wine-bibbers and harlots, nor to chase usurers, nor to attack rabbis.

Gautama was an ascetic—obtaining light about suffering and its cause, he adopted the begging bowl and unflinchingly pressed his way to the hearts of tyrants and untouchables and never failed to overcome hatred by wise compassion, which was his highest vision.

Krishna was an ascetic—seeing that war, and ruthless war at that, became necessary after his failure to secure peace with honour, for which he used all possible avenues, he led the Pandavas to the gory field of duty. The Master of his own Mercy stood unmoved amidst the havoc all around.

There are others, Twice-Borns, who overcame doubt and hypocrisy. But all such began that task as mortals in the world of soul-doubts and social-hypocrisy; all such took the inner resolve in the sanctity of heart-silence; all such, desiring to lift up high the banner of mysticism and proclaim its reign near at hand, gave the example to others by changing their own modes of life.

True asceticism is also true æstheticism. Doubt dies as old habits die; hypocrisy dies as mental and moral austerity is practised. Also, the Inner Perception of true Feeling deepens as well as widens as one lives out in family and in society one's own visions and convictions. Therefore,—

> Give up more than one personal habit, such as practised in social life, and adopt some few ascetic rules.

CIVILIZED LIFE.—*Crowded, noisy and full of vital power, is modern Society to the eye of matter; but there is no more still and silent, empty and dreary desert than that same Society to the spiritual eye of the Seer. Its right hand freely and lavishly bestows ephemeral but costly pleasures, while the left grasps greedily the leavings and often grudges the necessities of show. All our social life is the result and consequence of that unseen, yet ever present autocrat and despot, called* SELFISHNESS *and* EGOTISM. *The strongest will becomes impotent before the voice and authority of* SELF.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY, *Lucifer*, October 1887.

EASTERN ART AND THE OCCIDENT

[**M. Jean Buhot,** the well-known Editor of *Revue des Arts Asiatiques* and an acknowledged authority on art, wrote in our issue of September 1931 on "Renaissance in Art Spiritual and Symbolic". He is a lover of the Orient and renders useful service to India as the Honorary Secretary of the Association Française des Amis de l'Orient.—EDS.]

It is well known that the whole Western world is at present going through a craze for everything that is or pretends to be—Oriental. A French author of conservative ideas, H. Massis, took the most gloomy view of this attitude, which he considered likely to shatter the cultural heirloom of the West; some other pessimists pointed out that the Romans had never taken an interest in the East until they were already on their downfall. In modern times, and particularly in France, we have known several fits of Orientalism. Our philosophers of the eighteenth century were interested in the Orient because of its ancient civilizations, which, though based on entirely different principles from ours, seemed to fare none the worse. Certain forms of Eastern art also were in favour, especially Chinese porcelain and Japanese lacquer. In the following generations the Egyptian expedition of Bonaparte (1798) and the conquest of Algiers (1830) turned the attention of painters and writers towards the Near East. In the 'sixties modern and popular Japanese art was discovered, and it certainly influenced several masters: Degas, Monet, Whistler, but I do not think it contributed anything to the brighter palette or to the realistic tendencies of the Impressionists, as has so often been stated. It helped them to break loose from certain conventions and that, after all, is the secret of every new development in art.

For the present vogue of things Oriental, we can, of course, discern several factors of unequal import and dignity.

And first there is a new feeling of human brotherhood, irrespective of nationality, religion, or race. The "colour" prejudice is, I may say, quite inexistent in France, and strongly repellent to the French nature—the last time some silly journalists tried to stir it up was on the occasion of the Russo-Japanese war. Nowadays a great many people travel or are called to work in the East—and this, by the way, is no negligible benefit of distant colonies—and as the Eastern peoples are better known, they are also better loved. Everything, of course, must have a beginning; accurate notions take a long time to sink into the popular mind. The "man in the street" still imagines Buddhism to be "the creed of all India," though he little realizes the considerable part played by Buddhist India in the civilization of the whole Far-Eastern world. Also Theosophical ideas reach a far larger circle

than that of professed Theosophists, and in view of the failure of Christianity, many earnest souls hope some new light will dawn upon them from Asia.

Taking now the question from the artistic standpoint, we find the same yearning for fresh inspiration. The wheel of fashion seems to revolve faster and faster, and, in order to satisfy a rather blasé public, artists must turn to every quarter of the globe for new ideas. I should think fully one half of the readers in the public library at Musée Guimet—the chief Oriental museum in Paris—are creative artists of some kind who try to stimulate their imagination by contact with Asiatic lore and Asiatic art: writers for the stage and the cinema, novelists, decorators, designers for fashions and textiles, etc. Some time ago I saw in an illustrated paper a snapshot of a princess on whose gown certain pleats were unmistakably borrowed from the Yakshīs of Bharhut! The great *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs* in Paris, 1925, gave evidence of a general ransacking of Eastern monuments. The Chü Yung Kuan gate at Nan-k'ou would be the latest thing for a "modern" Parisian doorway.

All this is very superficial, and I should hope, ephemeral. Nevertheless there is much in Eastern art which exactly meets the æsthetic requirements of our generation. Naturalism for instance (even in the English sense of the word) stands condemned. Art is conceived as a suggestion, not a representation of Nature. Perspective is now understood to be a mere convention, not a law as had been believed since the Renaissance. A knowledge of anatomy is considered as a help to a better understanding of movement, not as an end in itself. Cubists have long since broken up the conventional aggregates of subjects offered by Nature, and recomposed the elements according to their own vision. The Italian Futurists sought to express movement by the reduplication of forms. In short, the artist is completely free to express himself as he likes. Thus no one nowadays would criticize the Chinese painter for his bird's eye perspective, or the Hindu Sthapati for his images of deities with eight arms or four heads. That Rodin should have declared the Natarāja in the Madras museum a sublime masterpiece is no wonder, but I did feel moved when one day in 1922 two girls of fine feeling, though in a quite modest station of life, who certainly had never heard of this opinion, asked me where they could buy a Natarāja, or a cast of one!

I have no space to go into the many hints our architects draw from Chinese wooden architecture, for instance, and which fit in remarkably with the requirements of building in concrete; or into the various qualities that our artists admire in Eastern painting, sculpture, drama, etc. Eastern music is little known as yet, and I doubt if it will ever find in the West the congenial, tranquil, atmosphere which is essential to its

enjoyment. "Le japonisme" *à la* Whistler who boasted, it is said, he could decorate a wall with a single butterfly—is out of fashion. But Chinese, and still more Indian, art is very much admired; it is even understood, but better perhaps from the *dilettante's* than from the artist's standpoint. What I mean is that the mental disposition of the Oriental artist and the psychological process of his creative work remain entirely foreign to his Western admirer and would-be imitator. Take for instance those marvellous representations of animals by Indian, Chinese, and Japanese artists. They could not have been drawn from nature, not even from quick sketches; besides, who ever heard of an Oriental artist pulling out a sketch-book in order to draw from life a bird on the wing? The animals must have been observed with a wonderful perseverance, and their infinitely varied aspects committed to memory and "visualized" when the time came for painting them. And the same is true of Oriental landscape and figure painting. Such an effort of concentration would make an Occidental's mind reel. Dr. A. K. Coomarswamy has repeatedly pointed out that the Indian artist has his picture, relief, or statue finished in his brain before he sets about the actual execution, much as the worshipper actually sees the Deity owing to his spiritual training. This sheds a certain light on the whole of Oriental art, though no European critic seems to have investigated the question as yet.

And again, consider the seething abundance and the sheer magnitude of many works of art in Asia, such as that cliff at Māvallipuram, ninety feet long by thirty high, where the descent of Ganga is carved; or the reliefs of Angkor Wat, with their minute detail, extending over hundreds of yards; or those of Boro-Budur, running up to a total length of two and a half miles! We cannot even realize how such an amazing unity of style and artistic perfection was ever attained, and how so many men of talent can have been content to work in the rank and file of artisans in order to carry out a collective masterpiece! There is no Western artist but craves more or less avowedly after personal recognition.

No study of Oriental art will, I think, be very profitable to the West until some attempt is made to imitate also the mental attitude of the Oriental artist.

JEAN BUHOT

A GREAT JNANA-YOGIN OF THE WEST*

[**Professor D. S. Sarma,** translator of the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (Students' Edition) and *The Gospel of Love* (Nārada Sutras) and author of *A Primer of Hinduism* is already known to our readers. Below we print an able, comparative study of western and eastern thought.—EDS.]

The soul is furious for self-knowledge. Her face is lit with passion, red with rage for the arrears withheld from her in God, because she is not all God is by nature, because she has not all God has by nature.

This rather startling passage in the writings of Meister Eckhart, who, like the ancient seers of India, deliberately set knowledge above love, reveals the intensity of his spiritual quest. It is a mistake to suppose that a Jñāna-Yogin is a mere dry-as-dust metaphysician or a cold intellectual theologian. On the contrary, the fires of God burn in him at a white heat, because he is in the last stages of assimilation to the Spirit. Eckhart himself employs in one of his sermons the figure of the consumption of fuel by fire to describe the progress of spiritual life.

It is God's intention to give Himself entirely to us. As fire to consume the wood must penetrate the wood, finding the wood unlike. That is a matter of time. First it makes it warm, then hot, then it smokes and crackles on account of its unlikeness; and the hotter the wood grows, the quieter and stiller it becomes; and the liker the fire, the more peaceful it becomes till at last it turns to fire altogether.

The fervour of devotion, the tumult of the soul in the presence of its Lord, the ecstatic dance and the feeling of "the cruel bonds of Love" are therefore to be looked upon as rather signs of spiritual immaturity. When the soul has traversed the full circle, it enters into peace that passeth understanding. Its virtues are still there, its orisons are still there, but they are all subordinated to the ineffable peace of pure Being. Blessed, indeed, are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. But Meister Eckhart says that more blessed are those who hunger and thirst after the Presence of God; and most blessed are those who, having attained to the eternal "Now," hunger and thirst after nothing at all. Thus we have the three well-known stages of the mystic's progress—call them purification, illumination and union.

Most of Meister Eckhart's sermons, sayings and writings are concerned, like our own Upanishads, with the final stage of the spiritual journey. The soul's beatitude, its relation to Deity, the mutual relations of the three Persons of the Christian Trinity, and the nature of the Supreme Godhead—these are the questions to which he returns again and again, now explaining himself, now contradict-

**Meister Eckhart*, by Franz Pfeiffer, translated by C. de B. Evans, was reviewed in our pages by John Middleton Murry in June 1930. A companion volume II has now been issued by the same publishers—John M. Watkins, 21 Cecil Court, Charing Cross Road, London. Vol. I—20*s*.; Vol. II—12*s*. 6*d*. —EDS.

ing himself, now pouring his burning experience into the moulds of orthodoxy, and now letting himself go with an audacity and a boldness of speculation that brought on at last after his death the condemnation of Rome. But he has at the same time on almost every page illuminating and characteristic remarks on moral and devotional life which seem to be strangely in accord with the teachings of the mystics of India. It is not merely that Eckhart sets contemplative life above active life, for many a Christian mystic has done so crediting the psalmist with greater spirituality than the crusader. His affiliations to Indian thought are strongest in the great value he attaches to detachment in his scale of virtues, in his insistence on the soul's turning away from all creatures before attempting to seek God, in his recognition of the transitional character of all ethical achievement, and above all in his conception of Godhead as a purely passive Essence of which nothing can be predicated and with which the emancipated soul is ultimately to be identified.

According to Eckhart, detachment from all creatures is the highest virtue whereby a man may knit himself most closely to God and wherein he is most like to his Exemplar. He extols detachment above love, above humility, and above mercy or kindness, and concludes by saying, "In short, when I reflect on all the virtues, I find not one so wholly free from fault, so unitive to God as is detachment". In another place he says, "I would have you know that to be empty of creatures is to be full of God, and to be full of creatures is to be empty of God". At the same time he teaches that "to abandon all things in mortal guise is to recapture them in God where they are in reality". This last is, by the way, a sufficient answer to those who, like Walter Pater, describe the mystic's renunciation of this world of bright colours and beauteous forms in his quest for the Absolute as a foolish attempt at escaping "into a formless and nameless, infinite void, quite evenly gray".

Again and again Meister Eckhart advises the religious aspirant to empty his mind of images of creatures and to cultivate what he calls "spiritual poverty". With that love of division and subdivision which is so characteristic of the medieval mind he speaks of five kinds of poverty—devilish poverty, golden poverty, willing poverty, spiritual poverty and divine poverty. The first applies to all who have not what they would fain have of riches and whose lack is their hell. The second applies to those who in the midst of their riches pass in and out unaffected by them. The third applies to those who renounce all their riches with a good grace. The fourth applies to those who are quit of all good works as well as their goods or property. And the fifth applies to those "whose riddance is both without and within and whose minds are bare and free from all contingent form".

It is to be observed that in speaking of the fourth kind of poverty, which he terms spiritual poverty, Meister Eckhart approximates closely to the teachings of the *Gita*.

God seeks not His own, He is perfectly free in all His acts, which He does in true love. So does the man who is at one with God: he is perfectly free in all his deeds; he does them out of love and without why, just to glorify God.

With this we may compare the following verses from the *Gita*:—

There is nothing in the three worlds, O Arjuna, for me to achieve, nor is there anything to gain which I have not gained. Yet I continue to work. (III. 22)

Works do not defile me; nor do I long for their fruit. He who knows me thus is not bound by his works. Men of old who sought deliverance knew this and did their work. Therefore do thy work as the ancients did in former times. (IV. 14, 15 and 16)

That is, all actions should be performed in a spirit of worship and self-effacement. When they are so performed the agent attains spiritual freedom, he achieves what Eckhart calls spiritual poverty, for he works and yet he works not. It is God that works in and through him.

They are quit of all good works: the eternal Word does all their work, while they are idle and exempt from all activity.—*Eckhart.*

Therefore arise and win renown; subdue thy foes and enjoy a prosperous kingdom. *By Me they have been slain already. Be thou merely an instrument, O Arjuna.—Gita.*

Like all Jñāna-Yogins of India, Meister Eckhart is emphatic about the ancillary position of all purely ethical achievement in spiritual life. He defines virtue as a mean between vice and perfection and says that the fruit of virtue will never be obtained until the soul is caught up above virtues. According to him the perfection of virtue consists in freedom from all virtues.

The utmost a spirit can attain to in this body is to dwell in a condition beyond the necessity of virtues; where goodness as a whole comes natural to it, so that not only is it possessed of virtues, but virtue is part and parcel of it: it is virtuous not of necessity but of innate good nature. Arrived at this the soul has traversed and transcended all necessity for virtues; they are now intrinsic in her.

To the soul which thus perfects itself in virtues, especially in the supreme virtue of absolute detachment, comes the Grace of God. Meister Eckhart, using naturally the terms of Christian symbolism, loves to call it the birth of the Son in the soul.

When the soul is free from time and place, the Father sends His Son into the soul.

Why do we pray or why do we fast or do our work withal? I say, so that God may be born in our souls. What were the Scriptures written for? And why did God create the world and the angelic nature? Simply that God might be born in the soul.

Sometimes this central fact of spiritual life to which religious souls of all ages and countries bear witness Eckhart expresses directly, without the Christian symbolism, as in the following passage:—

He does not come as anything at all, nor yet as gaining something for Himself, but He comes ordering. He who was hidden comes and reveals Himself. He comes as the light which lay concealed in people's hearts and in their minds,

now taking shape in intellect and will and in the deepest being of the soul.

We are reminded of the words of the *Gita*:—

Out of compassion for them do I dwell in their hearts and dispel the darkness born of ignorance by the shining lamp of wisdom.

Hindu scriptures teach us that, though the soul is divine, it is subject to *upadhis* (limitations) on account of its *avidya* (ignorance). These prevent it from realising its identity. The soul need not acquire any new qualifications for its salvation. It has only to get rid of its disqualifications. For salvation, which means eternal life in God, is not something that is made, but something that is only realised. "Not by creation is the Uncreated to be gained," says the Upanishad. And how startlingly near is Meister Eckhart to the Indian sages when he says:—

Though we are God's sons we do not realize it yet . . . . Sundry things in our souls overlay the knowledge and conceal it from us.

According to him the soul is double-faced. Its upper face is in eternity, and there it knows nothing of time nor of body. But its lower face is turned downwards and operates in the world of the senses, of space and time. The former, of course, is the noblest part of the soul. Eckhart calls it by various names—the tabernacle of the soul, the spiritual light, and most frequently, the divine spark. And it is there that God brings to birth His only Son, imprinting on the soul His own likeness. The oftener this divine birth takes place in one's soul, the closer grows one's union with God, the more abundant is the flow of divine Grace.

But living in Grace, "living as sons in His Son and being the Son Himself" is not the highest state. Like the ancient Hindu mystics, Eckhart courageously goes forward where his experience leads him. One of the Upanishads says: "Now if a man worships another deity, thinking the deity is one and he is another, he does not know."—*Brihad.* (I. iv. 10) Eckhart does not stop with the state of Grace. For Grace is after all, as he says, creaturely. As long as the soul is in Grace, he feels it is still confined. Sometime or other it must ascend in Grace and finally transcend it before it can see God. Nay, more. To reach the centre of Godhead, to be one with the Divine Essence the soul must be bereft not only of all creaturely activity and divine Grace, but also of "God" Himself.

It sounds strange that the soul must lose her God, yet I affirm that in a way it is more necessary to perfection that the soul lose God than she lose creatures. Everything must go. The soul must subsist in absolute nothingness. It is the full intention of God that the soul shall lose her God, for as long as the soul possesses God, is aware of God, knows God, she is aloof from God.

When Eckhart is on this highest plane of thought and experience in which he is most at home he makes a number of statements regarding Godhead, God, the Logos and the soul which are perfectly familiar to us in this country, but

which are like bomb-shells thrown into the edifice of orthodox Christian Theism, or, for the matter of that, any Theism which obstinately wants to keep its chambers air-tight. First of all, as we have already said, he exalts gnosis over love in the final stage of spiritual life in a way which is bound to be distasteful to the average Christian. By knowledge, of course, he does not mean empirical knowledge which comes through the senses, understanding and reason, but the divine knowledge which comes through the kindling of the divine Spark in the soul—what we really mean by the Sanskrit word Jñāna, namely, life in, as well as knowledge of, God.

Understanding is the head of the soul. The superficial notion is that love stands first. But the soundest arguments expressly state (what is the truth) that the kernel of eternal life lies rather in knowledge than in love.

He takes his stand on the words of Christ, "This is eternal life, to know Thee the only true God" and argues thus:—

Our best authorities declare that knowledge is nobler than love. Love and will take God as being good. If God were not good, will would have none of Him; if God were not lovely, love would scout Him. But understanding would not. Knowledge is not confined either to good or to love or to wisdom or lordship. By putting names to God the soul is only dressing Him up and making a figure of God. Nor is this the doing of knowledge. Though God were neither good nor wise, still understanding would seize Him; it strips everything off, not stopping either at wisdom or good, nor majesty nor power. It pierces to naked being and grasps God bare, ere He is clothed in thought with wisdom and goodness.

The distinction that Eckhart draws between the unqualified and quiescent Godhead and the active beneficent God of love and power, who is eternally bringing forth His Son in the universe and in the soul of man, is closely parallel to the distinction that is drawn in the Vedanta between Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman, or Iśvara, as will be seen from the following extracts:—

Goodness, wisdom and anything else that we attribute to God are impurities with God's abstract essence.

God and Godhead are as different as earth is from heaven . . . God works, Godhead does not work, here is nothing to do; in it is no activity. It never envisaged any work.

In the abstract Godhead there is no activity: the soul is not perfectly beatified until she casts herself in the desolate Deity, where neither act nor form exists, and there merged in the void loses herself; as self she perishes and has no more to do with things than she had when she was not.

And, lastly, we come to the vexed question of the state of the emancipated soul. It is precisely here that Eckhart's teaching is most unacceptable to the orthodox Christian, for he stops at nothing short of the absolute identity of the soul with God. He says:—

Now there is nothing foreign nor aloof betwixt God and the soul, therefore she is not *like* God; she is identical with Him, the very same as He is.

Thou shalt lose thy thy-ness and dissolve in His His-ness; thy thine shall be His Mine, so utterly one Mine that in Him shalt thou know eternalwise His is-ness, free from becoming: His nameless nothingness.

We are here reminded of the

well-known passage in the Upanishads:—

> As the flowing rivers disappear in the sea losing their name and form, so does the knower freed from name and form go to the Divine Being greater than the Great. He who knows that highest Brahman becomes Brahman.

The teaching of this great Jñāna-Yogin of the West on points such as these is particularly valuable to the students of Vedanta in India, because what he says is derived more or less from his own spiritual experience and maintained against the authoritative doctrines of his Church, and consequently it is somewhat of an independent testimony to the great truths taught by the ancient Hindu seers. Unfortunately, *these truths which are the outcome of the unique spiritual intuitions of our race are too often taught in this country as hardened doctrines and repeated by every tyro in theology in such a light-hearted and supercilious manner as to make a truly religious man shudder with fear and disgust.* That God is an ineffable perfection, that our human categories of thought, will and feeling cannot but fail to describe the essential unity of His Being, that personality is only the highest kind of symbol we can employ to denote the various phases of His nature as they appear to us, and that in the highest experience of the soul's communion with Him the barriers that usually surround it fall off and disappear making it continuous with the Infinite Consciousness, in which there is neither far nor near, neither this nor that, neither then nor now—these and similar teachings of our Upanishads are not mere articles of a creed or the suppositions of faith, but statements of fact based on actual experience. They remain, of course, mere intellectual formulæ giving no spiritual sustenance to one, so long as they are not reconverted into facts of individual experience. Just as our physical strength depends not on the stores of food we have at our disposal, but on the quantity that we can really digest and assimilate, so also our spiritual strength depends not on the experience of the Rishis stored in our Scriptures, but on that part of it we can really make our own.

D. S. SARMA

MODERN SUPERSTITIONS

[**G. B. Harrison, M. A. (Cantab.) Ph. D. (London)**, of the London University, was visiting Professor of English in the University of Chicago in 1929. He was in India and Mesopotamia during the War. He is the author of *Shakespeare: the Man and His Stage* (with E. H. G. Lamborn) *England in Shakespeare's Day, John Bunyan: A Study in Personality, The Lancaster Witches 1612*, and is the Editor of *The Bodley Head Quartos*.

That superstition in connection with omens and dreams, crass ignorance about talismans and the practice of sundry occult arts prevail to-day, as always, is a fact. It is no more surprising than the persistence of the superstition (*a*) that all supernormal phenomena are "stuff and nonsense" or (*b*) that there is not and that there cannot be any basis or any explanation of them. The antidote to superstition is knowledge, and our generation will do well to begin with the view that all bizarre and out-of-the-way forms of nonsense are but shadows, however distorted, of realities. The two volumes of *Isis Unveiled* by H. P. Blavatsky are replete with the exposure of the false and the exposition of the true in the realm of psychic forces and occult phenomena.—EDS.]

It is a common belief, which a judicious selection of historical facts will seemingly confirm, that we are more enlightened than our poor fathers. Witches, for instance, practise with such ill success that they are fallen beneath the contempt of the law; so that if a scholar chance to reprint some old treatise of witchcraft, critic and reader will complacently murmur "incredible days," congratulating themselves that new science has confounded old superstition. Yet Englishmen who believed in witchcraft and persecuted witches three centuries ago were in other respects not void of intelligence; the generations of Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Donne, of Bacon, Harvey, Hooker, or later of Thomas Browne, were not palpably inferior to our own. Whence arise two doubts: whether the superstitions of the past were not more solidly founded in fact than would nowadays appear; and whether our own age has not its full share of credulities which hereafter will be derided as incredible superstition.

Superstition is of various kinds. Often it is a debased and imperfect kind of science, taking the form of undue respect, which arose from a hasty mistaking of result and cause, for mishaps following such phenomena as crossed knives, ill-omened numbers, ladders, black cats, spilt salt, Fridays, grandmotherly sayings, Scriptural texts, and the like. These are passive superstitions.

Active superstitions, whereby believers would gain some knowledge or effect by magical practices, are not less common. In the daily paper which insures me against common mischances, there is often to be found a large advertisement of a mascot that has brought luck to thousands, and not least to its purveyors. Clairvoyants and palmists still flourish, though in some

apprehension of the law, which may however commonly be evaded if the witch or wise woman conceal her calling under some title compounded with "psycho". Yet few of us can have avoided the experiences of credible and sane friends that would confirm such practices. Within the last six years a neighbour village in Essex quietly boasted of its witch, and not long ago I was told of three instances where a love spell from *The Golden Bough* was used with immediate and embarrassing success and subsequent huge disaster.

On the whole our behaviour is seldom coloured by active superstition in normal times; but once favourable conditions exist, even the hardiest is tainted; for no man can be certain of his reason when he is afraid. Civilized man is less prone to superstition than barbarous, because civilized man lives more safely; but when civilization no longer protects, then fear returns, and superstition.

This was well seen during the Great War, when emotions were stretched tight and vibrated to every touch of fear. Hidden witchcrafts were uncovered, and superstition reappeared in all the old forms; conjurations of the dead, visions of angels, charms, protective and malignant magic, enormous gullibility, multitudinous lying. Witches indeed were no longer persecuted as such but the old thrill of a witch hunt was recreated in a new spy mania, whereby the general fear was embodied in a local scapegoat. One instance is typical of many. An unhappy being happened to speak English with a guttural accent; how could he be other than a German spy? And the charge was confirmed when he was reported to have smiled to himself in a sardonic and sinister manner during an air raid. Thereafter he was hounded into suicide by the murmurings of his neighbours. Whenever the calm of society is disturbed, credulity soon shoves down science. We are apt to forget that so long as we can read the newspaper daily the great liar has small openings for the practice of his craft; but let a general condition of ignorance be re-established and universal lying is immediately rampant, as happened in the General Strike when newspapers disappeared for a few days.

It is not however beliefs and practices—of which we are really ashamed—that will appear so incredible to our children; but rather those institutions which we accept without question as eternally fit. Whilst we send a policeman or his wife to spy in disguise upon a palmist, we regard a bishop or a clergyman as personally and professionally respectable. And yet even the mildest ritualistic curate claims enormous supernatural powers over matter and spirit which are well beyond scientific demonstration. Not only is the curate immune from prosecution as a mountebank, his creeds are by law established, and his person respected so highly that his testimonial on certain kinds of documents is accepted above all others, except a magistrate's.

Even the law itself, which we regard as peculiarly an instrument of light, has its superstitions and cruelties, as of old. The administration of justice is based upon the optimistic belief that anyone is capable of speaking the truth, the whole truth, and indeed nothing but the truth, months after the fact, in the emotional atmosphere of a law court, at the promptings of a skilled and hostile barrister, and before a large audience. In such a theatre matters of life and death are decided; but any teacher or scientist knows how hardly even an intelligent student is taught to comprehend a fact, let alone to reason from it.

Doubtless the hearty barbarities of older days have disappeared, but there remains an infinity of mental torment in the slow progress of the murderer from arrest to the gallows, as he faces the agonies of a coroner's inquest, a magistrate's court, the assizes, the Court of Appeal, the petition, and at last the hangman, the whole series of torments perhaps spread over six months or more. The victim, it is true, was murdered, but only once. And as for those who behave abnormally because their bodies are abnormal the law still regards hard labour as the fittest treatment for *corpus insanum*.

Indeed, in the procession of ideas, to-day's superstition is but yesterday's creed; and our creeds of to-day will decompose into superstition to-morrow. Could we but go forward three centuries to read of "The Folklore of the Twentieth Century," we should find ourselves lumped with our forefathers among the backward and barbarous civilizations.

G. B. HARRISON

There must be truth and fact in that which every people of antiquity accepted and made the foundation of its religions and its faith. Moreover, as Haliburton said, "Hear one side, and you will be in the dark; hear both sides, and all will be clear." The public has hitherto had access to, and heard but one side —or rather the two one-sided views of two diametrically opposed classes of men, whose *primâ facie* propositions or respective premises differ widely, but whose final conclusions are the same—Science and Theology. And now our readers have an opportunity to hear the other—the defendant's—justification and learn the nature of our arguments.

Were the public to be left to its old opinions: namely, on one side, that Occultism, Magic, the legends of old, etc., were all the outcome of ignorance and superstition; and on the other, that everything outside the orthodox groove was the work of the devil, what would be the result?

—H. P. BLAVATSKY, *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, pp. 794–5.

THE REBIRTH OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

[**George Godwin** wrote in our July issue on "Crime and Punishment".

Last month M. Hugh I'A. Fausset writing on the subject of Intuition pointed out the danger of a lop-sided growth of human intellect in the Western world. Mr. Godwin strikes the same note in reference to the whole of Western civilization and, in looking forward to a change for the better, visions the Ideal of "Universal Brotherhood," the emergence of "Eternal Values," and a life of "Self-Fulfilment". These closely correspond to the three objects of H. P. Blavatsky's Theosophical Movement. Our author who writes with vigour and discernment does not see the fount of these spiritual impulses in "formalised religion" which "is divorced from life" as it is from "the precepts of Christ". He advocates seeking of Eternal Values. But how can one arrive at "Eternal Values"? How bring conviction of his view that "all the Sages of the world have come finally upon the same truth"? A new philosophy of life is what the Western world needs. That new philosophy is very old; its central thought may be thus expressed in the words of a Great Indian Sage known to but very few:—

> Teach the people to see that life on this earth, even the happiest, is but a burden and an illusion; that it is our own Karma, the cause producing the effect, that is our own judge—our saviour in future lives—and the great struggle for life will soon lose its intensity.

Yes, the West must turn to the East.—EDS.]

Western civilization is the concrete product of a certain philosophy of life. It is a philosophy that emphasizes and stresses the prime importance of man's dominion over the material forces of the external world in which he moves and has his being: it is the philosophy of material power, it is the worship of machines.

In its simplest form it takes the material success of the individual as the *summum bonum* of life. From earliest childhood's days the mind of the child is coloured and stained by an ideology that postulates the virtue of acquisition.

Virtue in life is "To get on," and moral precepts and moral values are inculcated chiefly that they may be the instrument of this purpose.

Thus the western adage has it that honesty is the best policy. That is, honesty is recommended because it promises material dividends.

The result of such early teaching is inevitable. It produces a mental condition that views life as a competitive struggle in which every man's hand is against that of his neighbour; while between States it produces jealousies and animosities inherent in the intense and often ferocious struggle for territory and raw materials. Although many wars have been waged on grounds ostensibly moral and idealistic, any careful analysis of the causes that went before them reveal their true origin in the philosophy that postulates the imperative importance of material power.

This is the philosophy that has produced the chaotic condition of the modern world, and it might

be termed the Philosophy of TO HAVE

Now just as the artist's concepts of beauty and significant form condition the quality of his creations, so the mass philosophy of life of any civilization inevitably determines the quality of its social, political and economic activities. The creator, in short, is revealed in the thing created, and so one might say that every age makes of itself, unwittingly, a spiritual self-portrait.

What is this portrait of the modern world, and what does it reveal? It is a picture that provides us with a clinical representation of disease, for *materialism, now at its nadir*, moves swiftly towards an inevitable collapse.

It is the Nemesis that inevitably overtakes and overwhelms action that proceeds from false ethical values. Western civilization, as we know it, is moving swiftly to collapse because from its birth it has been nurtured with false concepts of the purpose of man's life upon earth.

It may be argued that this is no more than the inevitable destiny of every human society—the Spenglerian destiny that foredooms every civilization, birth, growth, decay and death. And it is true enough that no civilization, expressed in terms of the concrete, has survived: all that the past teaches us is the survival value of the Absolute.

Beauty does not perish, nor does holiness. And no age that flowered richly in these qualities has perished. This is true of the ancient Greece of Praxiteles and Plato, of the India of the Ramayana and the Mahabharata—true of every civilization that has caught and held to values transcending those of our modern materialistic age.

The distinction is fundamental and vital: it is the conflict between two totally opposed conceptions of life. On the one hand we have the philosophy of TO HAVE, on the other, the philosophy of TO BE. Differently expressed, it is the conflict between materialism and a spiritual conception of man's nature.

One who has succeeded by western standards put the matter thus: "It is necessary to be a realist: life is a wolf's game. It is every man for himself." And if one is to judge by works, then, both as regards normal conduct as between individuals and the tolerated anarchy that exists in the international sphere, that statement crystallizes a universal conception of human relations. Incidentally, it points us to the heart of the problem of the modern world, so often envisaged as one amenable to mechanical solution. That problem lies in the heart of man and nowhere else.

There can be no reconstruction of western civilization without a spiritual renascence. The yard-stick by which all reformative programmes in the social, economic and political fields must be measured is the yard-stick of spiritual values.

From what fount will these spiritual impulses gush? Surely

not from formalised religion, for the religion of the western world no longer colours the lives and activities of those who profess it. It is divorced from daily life. For where can one see evidence of any attempt to practise those precepts of Christ to which this monstrous civilization gives lip-service?

To love one's neighbour as oneself is a hard precept to live up to in a world where every man seeks gain at the expense of his brother.

To lay up for oneself no treasure upon earth is a counsel of perfection that has a strange ring in a world that reckons poverty in itself as a crime.

Look upon modern materialism as expressed in the acquisitive society of the western world and you perceive that it has taken the Beatitudes and practised their inversion. There is no place for the pure in heart, for the humble, for them that sorrow, for love is the outcast and has no place in this philosophy—the philosophy of TO HAVE.

Mechnikoff, in his *Disharmonies in Nature*, demonstrated the many ways in which man's physical form reveals a perpetual adaptation to a changing physical environment, yet never achieves a perfect harmony with it.

In the picture of the western world to-day, one sees evidence of another sort of disharmony: it is that of man's soul-lag. His intellectual apparatus has advanced too swiftly. He has become master of giant forces. He has grasped mighty instruments to power. He has become godlike in his domination over natural forces. His machines have made him mighty.

And what has he made of it?

Modern civilization is like a great ship navigated by an idiot. It plunges forward, but no man can foretell its landfall.

At this moment of writing there are in the world millions who lack for sufficient bread. Yet the granaries of Canada stand full.

In countries dishonoured by abject poverty and shameful housing conditions, skilled workers are busy producing the toys of the rich.

War stands universally condemned; yet the nations, giving lip-service to perpetual peace, continue to arm.

And behind all these distracting phenomena lies one sole cause of them: it is man's spiritual myopia, his worship of the God of TO HAVE.

The world does not need action: it needs meditation. Action has been preached as a virtue in itself, irrespective of its objectives. We call for bigger and better houses, bigger and better battleships, bigger and better business. What we need is bigger and better souls.

It took the stupendous opportunities of our modern world to reveal man's unfittedness to use them wisely. Every potential blessing he has turned into a curse. Life has become, not more beautiful, but more horrific. Fear lies like a shadow over the world. But it is not the primeval fear of the first man. It is not fear of the wrath of the gods or of the

malignant elements: it is fear of himself, of his own kind. That dominating fear is inevitable in a world wherein the ideal of universal brotherhood has yet to be recognized.

Man has acquired sufficient scientific knowledge for the next century. He needs now, more than anything else, a quiescent period wherein to learn how to use the powers of which he has possessed himself.

And that means that humanity must turn from the problems of the external world to the greater mysteries of the human soul. Man must cease to pursue material ends and turn to ends that are spiritual. For *unless man masters himself and governs his life by the eternal values, all his triumphs must turn to disaster.*

Materialism has been accorded an enthusiastic trial: and it has failed. It becomes daily more and more apparent that its philosophy is false, its values contemptible. When one looks upon its face we see something that is evil, monstrous, diseased.

But, even so, we see that from the death of this world order may be born something finer, a human society in which the ancient ideals of brotherhood and spiritual development will cease to be the empty phrases of an effete priesthood and become realities in the daily lives of men.

Maybe, out of the chaos of the present order will emerge another less concerned with the machinery of life, more concerned with living. But before that is possible there must come a rebirth.

For, after all, of what does intrinsic life consist if not of the inward life which is the life of the spirit?

But modern man is so deafened by the roar of the machines, so intoxicated by speed, so engrossed in the accumulated material wealth, that he is only now beginning to perceive that the pinnacles of those monstrous towers which he has raised to Mammon totter.

For the truth can no longer be denied: the whole vast edifice of the modern world begins to disintegrate. It may be made to function yet a little longer, but its ultimate doom is certain.

What will the man of to-morrow put in its place? If he turns for a solution to the cunning of his brain, he will produce something ostensibly different, but intrinsically the same. He will devise a New Materialism. But it will still be a materialism, even though it have guarantees against slaughter and pitiless exploitation.

The hope of the world lies in a change of heart. It lies in the application of teachings that were old when Jesus Christ walked the hills of Palestine. For if you examine the wisdom of the past you will perceive that *all the Sages of the world have come finally upon the same truth.* And it is this: That man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

Emancipated from his lust to possess, man may turn to a new way of life when his objective

will be self-fulfilment through the practice of the ancient virtues.

We see the modern world as a vast number of pressing problems, whereas there exists but one problem, and that the problem of man himself. The solution of the evils of the world lies in the hearts of men and nowhere else. The modern world is the monument of the vanity of earthly desires. It is a picture of spiritual disease. It is futility made manifest.

And the other path?

It is the way of the spirit. This is the affirmation of wisdom in all the ages—a denial of the doctrines of materialism.

If man struggles to-day against evils that threaten to overwhelm him, it is not because he is the victim of an unkind fate: it is because he is the victim of himself.

Those evils have sprung up upon the soil of the philosophy of TO HAVE. They will be overcome only when man turns to the philosophy of TO BE.

For that which is evil bears evil. And that which is good bears good. Which is to say: By their fruits shall ye know them.

Maybe man will master the machines that now master him and will use them merely to make possible an earthly existence consecrated to the nurture of his lagging soul.

The problem of the modern world is a spiritual problem and the materialism of the modern world moves to an inevitable doom because, by implication, it denies that truth.

The intellect of man has led him into darkness, and only by the light of the lamp of his soul will he climb back into the clear light of spiritual day.

Then his desire will be TO BE.

For he will then perceive that no man may amass and possess riches, though some may by their riches be possessed.

But before that can be, all that modern materialism stands for must go.

It is, indeed, already going. For its doom is inherent in its denial of man's spirit. And that denial is its Nemesis.

But out of death comes rebirth and renewal. What will follow the collapse of the West? No man can say: the answer is locked in a hundred million human hearts.

GEORGE GODWIN

SOME ALCHEMISTS OF ISLAM

[**Dr. E. J. Holmyard** is too old a contributor to need an introduction. In our second number (February 1930) he noted the "extreme antiquity of the alchemical tradition". In the present article he gives an interesting sketch of four great Islamic exponents of the Science.—EDS.]

One of our leading authorities, Dr. Charles Singer, has recently stated that, in investigating a medieval document, the first question a scholar asks himself is whether it shows signs of Arabian influence. To such a degree is Western thought indebted to the learning of early Islam that scarcely any of the older branches of knowledge are devoid of Muslim impress. Theology, logic, philosophy, mysticism, music, astronomy, medicine and physics, all owe much not merely to the wisdom of Hellas preserved and transmitted by the enthusiasm and earnest labour of Arabic-writing scholars, but to independent contributions peculiarly Muslim in character. Avicenna, Averrhoes, Ghazzali, Omar Khayyam, Ibn Khaldun, Al-Kindi, Qusta ibn Luqa, have carved their names indelibly in the temple of human intellectual achievements; and Muhammad himself has brought spiritual insight and comfort to millions of our fellow men.

Among all the mental activities of medieval Islam, few were cultivated with greater skill and assiduity than the science or art of alchemy. Some account of the fundamentally important work of Jabir ibn Hayyan has already appeared in these pages; but Jabir was merely the first of a long line of accomplished chemists and alchemists, whose powers of experiment were necessarily limited, but whose capacity for abstract thought reached a very high level. With the expansion of the Islamic Empire, men of widely diverse races adopted the language of Arabia as their medium of literary expression, and even at the present day many Arabic words are to be found in the technical vocabularies of science. Among those adepts who acquired fame as notable exponents of alchemical doctrine were two Western Muslims, Ibn Arfa' Ra's and Maslama al-Majriti, and two Eastern, Abu'l-Qasim al-'Iraqi and Aidamir al-Jildaki.

The first of these four men is properly called Abu'l-Hasan Ali ibn Musa ibn al-Qasim, but he usually went by the name of Ibn Arfa' Ra's for reasons which have not come down to us. He is stated to have died at Fez in 1197 A.D., but may in reality have been nearly a century earlier. It is probable that he resided for some time in Spain, at Madrid, since he is occasionally described as al-Andalusi ("the Andalusian") and al-Majriti ("the man of Madrid"). Details of his life are but scanty, though we may hope that future research will illuminate much that is dark at present; indeed, an investigation of chemis-

try in Moorish Spain would doubtless be of the utmost value for a proper understanding of the development of the science. The principal work of Ibn Arfa' Ra's is an alphabetically arranged collection of verses upon the philosopher's stone, known as *The Particles of Gold*. Written for the most part in that elegant and stately metre known as *Tawil*, they are noteworthy both for their real poetic merit and for their comprehensive expression of contemporary alchemical philosophy of the esoteric kind. They are by no means easy to understand, and many of the technical terms they contain are not to be found in the lexicons; but fortunately the author himself has left us a commentary on them, in the form of a dialogue with his pupil, Muhammad ibn Abdullah. Another commentary was made by Aidamir al-Jildaki, to whom we refer again later, in his work entitled *The Extreme of Delight*, several manuscripts of which are still extant. A third commentator remarks that Ibn Arfa' Ra's modelled his book upon the writings of Ares or Horus, of the Greek alchemist Theodorus, and of the Omayyad prince Khalid; "the inner meaning of his words," we are assured, "is clear to everyone who examines them with the Eye of Initiation". Like the much earlier adept Dhu'n-Nun of Egypt, Ibn Arfa' Ra's lays stress upon the mystical aspect of alchemy, expressing his views in allegorical language; yet he seems to have had some acquaintance with laboratory operations.

Maslama al-Majriti, *i.e.* Maslama of Madrid, was a celebrated astronomer and mathematician who flourished in Spain under the beneficent rule of the Caliph Al-Hakam II (961–976). By native authorities, he is credited with the authorship of a remarkable alchemical treatise entitled *The Sage's Step*, and is also said to have written *The Sage's Goal*, a work on magic well known to medieval Europe in the form of its Latin translation *Picatrix*. Unfortunately, there is more than a little doubt as to the correctness of this ascription, since, from internal evidence, we should judge that both works were composed after 1009 A.D., while Maslama is stated, on good authority, to have died in 1004 or 1007. The author—whoever he was—says in *The Sage's Step* that the best indication of the truth of the possibility of transmutation is its actual accomplishment, and that the alchemist should therefore practise his hand in operation, as well as his eye in observation and his mind in reflection. This extract alone is sufficient to show us that the author was mainly concerned with practical physical alchemy, and although he calls in the use of talismans and other magical agencies, he reveals himself throughout as a man thoroughly at home in the laboratory—a skilful experimentalist deeply versed in chemical processes and manipulations. Several of his descriptions of operations with metals, such as cupellation and the separation of silver from gold, are entire-

ly unambiguous in language, and can be followed with ease by a modern chemist.

As to the science of alchemy, he maintains that its foundation lies in geometry and arithmetic. For this mathematical training, he recommends the student to read Euclid and the *Almagest* of Ptolemy; after which he should turn his attention to the works of Aristotle, Democritus, Hermes and Apollonius of Tyana. The last two names are of interest as demonstrating yet again the belief, widely held among Muslim alchemists, that alchemy originated in the hidden lore of ancient Egypt. There is much to be said for this belief, and an interesting point in its favour is to be found in connection with that central jewel of alchemical literature, the *Tabula Smaragdina* or *Emerald Table* of Hermes. The most ancient known text of this perpetual enigma is contained in one of the authentic books of Jabir ibn Hayyan (*ca.* 722–803 A. D.), who claims to have taken it from Apollonius of Tyana. The latter, again, is said to have discovered a secret chamber in which a figure of Hermes sat on a golden throne holding the inscribed Emerald Table in his hands. Now Mr. Theodore Gaster has called attention to the fact that the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* contains a strikingly similar story, in Chapter LIV, where it is stated that "this chapter was found at Khmun [Hermopolis] on an alabaster [or lapis-lazuli] plaque, under the feet of the Majesty of the venerable god [Thoth or Hermes] in the writing of the god himself".

According to *The Sage's Step*, the base metals are, in reality, gold infected with various accidental or non-essential qualities. If these are removed, the metal assumes its true form of gold. There is (the book continues) only one Elixir, in spite of the contrary asseverations of many adepts. It is threefold in power, and is insoluble in water and incombustible. If projected upon imperfect metals, under appropriate conditions, it will transmute them into gold or silver; such transmutation is possible on account of the fact that the prime matter is the same in all metals.

These theories, except for the statement that there is only one Elixir instead of the usual two, are found more fully elaborated in the writings of an accomplished alchemist of the thirteenth century, Abu'l-Qasim al-'Iraqi. Although presumably a native of 'Iraq, Abu'l-Qasim seems to have lived and studied in Cairo, somewhere between 1250 and 1300. In 1250, the Mameluke Sultan Al-Mu'izz the Turkoman came to the throne, and appears to have thrown open to scholars the treasures of the library collected in the tenth century by the learned Caliph Al-Mu'izz li-Din Allahi. Abu'l-Qasim tells us that he studied no less than 40 quintals (some 2 tons!) of these books, and he certainly shows considerable familiarity with early writers on alchemy, both Muslim and Greek. Of his own works, the most interesting are the *Book of*

the Seven Climes and the *Book of Knowledge Acquired concerning the Cultivation of Gold*. The former contains an explanation of the enigmatical language employed by the alchemists, and of the disrepute into which alchemy had fallen. Briefly expressed Abu'l-Qasim's argument runs as follows: For the maintenance of the social order mutual service is essential, since not all men possess the technical ability to satisfy their needs. Should the knowledge of the method of preparing the Elixir become common property, every one would be rich and would therefore not need to work; hence the community would soon cease to exist. It is thus necessary to cloak the science of alchemy in obscure language, in order to prevent its dissemination among the vulgar. The "dark sayings" of the alchemists are due to their recognition of this fact. When, however, men took the allegories literally, and naturally failed to get satisfactory results, there was a reaction against alchemy, and the science fell into bad odour.

In the *Cultivation of Gold*, of which an English translation was published at Paris in 1923, Abu'l-Qasim's main thesis is that metals feed, grow and reproduce. The object of alchemy should therefore be to obtain the seed of gold and then to grow it in a suitable soil, such as mercury. Since, however, metals do not possess the power of rejecting unassimilable matter, the food that is supplied to them must be carefully prepared beforehand, in order that it may be completely absorbed. If this precaution is not taken, the seed of gold would, on growth, give rise to an impure, or mixed, metal. This theory is developed at some length, and numerous quotations from earlier alchemists are adduced in support of it. The book is by no means free from allegory, but Abu'l-Qasim was a clear and logical thinker, and there are unmistakable signs that he knew the discipline of the laboratory. His other works offer an attractive and promising field for research.

Aidamir al-Jildaki, who also lived for part of his life at Cairo (where he was still writing in 1360), is of importance chiefly on account of his extensive and deep knowledge of Muslim alchemical literature. In the preface to his commentary on Abu'l-Qasim's *Cultivation of Gold* he relates that he spent more than 17 years in the study of alchemy, and that he sat at the feet of numerous masters of the art in Iraq, Asia Minor, Morocco, Egypt, Syria, the Yemen and the Hejaz. He studied the works of both ancient and modern authors, and their operations upon compounds and mixtures, and finally arrived at a perfect knowledge. From the amazing bulk of his writings, it is evident that he must have used the major portion of his existence in collecting and explaining all the books upon alchemy that he could discover. Practically all the great European and Cairene libraries have manuscript copies of one or more of his treatises, and in Muslim countries he is even yet studied by

contemporary adepts. Among the innumerable points of interest displayed before us so lavishly, Al-Jildaki presents a complete lineage of alchemy, which he traces from Moses through Solomon and David to Alexander, Aristotle, and Socrates, thence to the Caliph Ali, Khalid and Jabir, and finally to such "moderns" as Al-Farabi, Rhazes, Avicenna and Abu'l-Qasim.

ERIC J. HOLMYARD

When it becomes undeniably proven that the claim of the modern Asiatic nations to a Secret Science and an esoteric history of the world, is based on fact; that, though hitherto unknown to the masses and a veiled mystery even to the learned, (because they had never the key to a right understanding of the abundant hints thrown out by the ancient classics), it is still no fairy tale, but an actuality—then the present work will become but the pioneer of many more such books. The statement that hitherto even the keys discovered by some great scholars have proved too rusty for use, and that they were but silent witnesses that there do exist mysteries behind the veil which are unreachable without a new key—is borne out by too many proofs to be easily dismissed. . . . No human-born doctrine, no creed, however sanctified by custom and antiquity, can compare in sacredness with the religion of Nature. The Key of Wisdom that unlocks the massive gates leading to the arcana of the innermost sanctuaries can be found hidden in her bosom only: and that bosom is in the countries pointed to by the great seer of the past century Emanuel Swedenborg. There lies the heart of nature, that shrine whence issued the early races of primeval Humanity, and which is the cradle of *physical* man.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY, *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. II, 795 & 797.

I. THE SYMBOLISM OF THE CROSS

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In the following simple presentation the learned author examines but one aspect of the ancient Aryan symbol; it is well to remember that "every symbol yields three fundamental truths and four implied ones, otherwise the symbol is false". It was to this that Plutarch referred when he said—"The mystic symbols are well known to us who belong to the 'Brotherhood' ". In her *Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, pp. 573–589, H. P. Blavatsky gives a profound and masterly exposition on "The Cross and the Pythagorean Decade" to which we must draw the attention of our author and others. We must also refer them to *Isis Unveiled* I, 508 and II, 253–55. While the student and the scholar will find these explanations most valuable, all will profit by a perusal of her article "Cross and Fire" reprinted from *The Theosophist* for November 1879.—EDS.]

Fifty years ago most people believed that the cross was a purely Christian symbol, and to have said anything to the contrary would have been regarded as rank heresy. Even in 1899 I was reprimanded severely by a review-writer because it was stated in the article "Cross," which I contributed to the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, that "the magic virtue ascribed to the cross has doubtless a non-Christian origin". Yet this was only a mild way of saying what is now accepted almost as a commonplace. Some of the evidence for the antiquity and wide distribution of the sign of the cross is to be found now in the volume of Hastings' *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* published in 1911. It was J. K. Cheyne, Oriel Professor of the Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford and Canon of Rochester Cathedral, who pointed out to me that the cross as a magical and religious symbol is very much older than Christianity. And, in passing, it is interesting to recall that this very remarkable scholar, having come at the end of his life to realize, with the insight and foresight of a true prophet, that one of our greatest needs, and perhaps our greatest need, is a reconciliation of religions, decided to adopt a world religion, and became an adherent of Bahaism. His last book, entitled *The Reconciliation of Races and Religions* and published in 1914, gives a sympathetic account of the new faith.

The cross and the triangle are two of the oldest and most widespread magical or religious symbols. Their antiquity is shown

clearly by the fact that in the old Hebrew alphabet the fourth letter has the form of a triangle and the last letter that of a cross. The triangle became in course of time a favourite Jewish symbol, and, like some other symbols, it was doubled to express the idea of an intensification of the power or significance ascribed to it. There is good reason to believe that the cross also was used as a sign or symbol by the Hebrews, and that there are references to its use in the Old Testament, though these references are obscured in the English translations. In the Book of Ezekiel (ix. 4, 6) we read of marking a cross on the foreheads of the faithful in Jerusalem who were to be spared from slaughter. It has been a common idea that the cross has power to avert evil. In the Book of Job (xxxi, 35), Job is represented as exclaiming, "Lo, here is my cross!"—though what exactly he means is not clear. Coming down to New Testament times, the eminent Aramaic scholar, Gustav Dalman, tells us that the Jewish passover lamb, which had according to the Jewish law to be roasted, was laid in the oven (*tannūr*) upon a spit in the form of a cross.

Now there is no reason to believe that Jesus anticipated a disastrous end to his ministry.* He hoped to live to establish the Kingdom of God upon earth. It is true that this is sometimes described as the Kingdom of Heaven; but Heaven was sometimes another name for God, so both expressions mean the same thing. Actually, the ministry of Jesus terminated abruptly when, after being haled before Pilate, he was condemned to death and, in accordance with Roman, but not with Jewish, practice, was crucified. There is no good reason to suppose that Jesus in his darkest moments anticipated such an end to his work on earth. To a Jew the cross of crucifixion was a thing of shame, an accursed tree. To the Jewish Christians the cross of Jesus was a stumbling-block. True, Jesus in a few passages of the Gospels is represented as saying that to be his disciple a man must deny himself and take up his cross and follow him (*Mark* viii, 34; *Matthew* xvi, 24; *Luke* ix, 23; cp. *Matthew* x, 38, *Luke* xiv, 27). But either the phrase was a current expression, or it was interpolated in the light of the subsequent crucifixion of Jesus. That the second possibility is likely, is suggested by the story of the rich young man who, according to *Mark* x, 17–21, (*Luke* xviii, 18–30), came to Jesus to ask what he should do to gain age-long life. Jesus is represented as saying to him: "One thing thou lackest. Go, sell whatever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow me." There is nothing here about taking up a cross. To be a true disciple of Jesus, the man is told to give up his riches and his life of luxury, to abandon his stately home, and to take to the open road. This is what it means,

* *cf.* H. P. Blavatsky's *Isis Unveiled* II, 545—EDS.

or rather what it meant, to be a Christian missionary.* Again, in the story of the lawyer who wished to gain age-long life (*Luke* x, 25–37) nothing is said about taking up the cross. In order to "live" (v. 28), that is to say, to live truly, he is told to minister to the afflicted wherever he may find them and to relieve their afflictions.

Jesus died upon the cross. This was an unexpected catastrophe, and came as a great shock to his followers. They were puzzled to account for such an end, and sought to understand what it meant. Then, after a time, by the well-known psychological device or habit of rationalisation, the Apostle Paul and other Christian leaders hit upon several theological explanations. According to the writer of the Fourth Gospel, when John the Baptist saw Jesus coming to him, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away (or beareth) the sin of the world" (*John* i, 29). Just as the Hebrews sacrificed animals to make atonement for sin, or were supposed to have sacrificed them for this purpose so Jesus was sacrificed on the cross to appease an angry God, and to make atonement for the sins of mankind. Similarly, Paul speaks of Jesus having effected a reconciliation between God and man "through the blood of his cross" (*Colossians* i, 20 ff.). This revolting idea is very prominent in Christian hymns, but it may be said, I think, to have been abandoned by most Christians in modern times. The prevailing idea now, another idea found in the Christian hymns, is that Jesus died a martyr to the truth, as he understood it. But this has been true of others than Christians.

There is a third idea, which is prominent also in Christian hymns, the idea that the cross symbolises new life. When the first shock of the crucifixion had been overcome, some of the early Christians, to whom the cross as a symbol was familiar, saw in the Christian cross not so much the instrument of death as the sign of life. The cross came to be identified with the instrument used by the ancient Egyptians to give new life to mummified bodies, an instrument known as "the sign of life" (*ankh*) and even referred to by modern scholars as "the cross of life". And so understood, the symbol does serve to express an idea which, according to the Aramaic tradition, was of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus. In connection with his teaching about the Kingdom of God, Jesus insisted that health and holiness are bound up with right living or with a right idea of life. What the Greek calls "salvation" the Aramaic (Syriac) expresses as "life". When the Greek says "Saviour" (*Sōtēr*) the Aramaic (Syriac) says "Life-giver" (*Machyānā*). Where the Greek says, "Thy faith has saved thee," the Aramaic (Syriac) says, "Thy faith

*In the other passages referred to above Jesus may have said that a disciple must deny himself and *take up his staff* and follow him. In the light of his subsequent crucifixion, this would be changed to *take up his cross*,

hath given thee life". So the Church Father Ephraem Syrus speaks of "the living cross". And the later writer of the Syriac Apocryphal Acts of Thomas speaks of the cross as "the living and life-giving cross," as "the living sign," and as "the sign of life". He speaks also, with true understanding of the gospel of Jesus, of a Christian putting on "the new man" and entering upon "the new life".

MAURICE A. CANNEY

II.—CROSS AND FIRE

Perhaps the most widespread and universal among the symbols in the old astronomical systems, which have passed down the stream of time to our century, and have left traces everywhere in the Christian religion as elsewhere,—are the Cross and the Fire—the latter, the emblem of the Sun. The ancient Aryans had them both as the symbols of Agni. Whenever the ancient Hindu devotee desired to worship Agni—says E. Burnouf *(Science des Religions*, c. 10)—he arranged two pieces of wood in the form of a cross, and, by a peculiar whirling and friction obtained fire for his sacrifice. As a symbol, it is called *Swastica*, and, as an instrument manufactured out of a sacred tree and in possession of every Brahmin, it is known as *Arani*.

The Scandinavians had the same sign and called it Thor's Hammer, as bearing a mysterious magneto-electric relation to Thor, the god of thunder, who, like Jupiter armed with his thunderbolts, holds likewise in his hand this ensign of power, over not only mortals but also the mischievous spirits of the elements, over which he presides. In Masonry it appears in the form of the grand master's mallet; at Allahabad it may be seen on the Fort as the Jaina Cross, or the Talisman of the Jaina Kings; and the gavel of the modern judge is no more than this *crux dissimulata* as de Rossi, the archæologist calls it; for the gavel is the sign of power and strength, as the hammer represented the might of Thor, who, in the Norse legends splits a rock with it, and kills Medgar. Dr. Schliemann found it in *terra cotta* disks, on the site, as he believes, of ancient Troy, in the lowest strata of his excavations; which indicated, according to Dr. Lundy, "an Aryan civilization long anterior to the Greek—say from two to three thousand years B. C." Burnouf calls it the oldest form of the cross known, and affirms that "it is found personified in the ancient religion of the Greeks under the figure of Prometheus "the fire-bearer," crucified on mount Caucasus, while the celestial bird—the *Cyena* of the Vedic hymns,—daily devours his entrails. Boldetti, (*Osservazioni* 1., 15, p. 60) gives a copy from the painting in the cemetery of St. Sebas-

tian, representing a Christian convert and grave-digger, named Diogenes, who wears on both his legs and right arm the signs of the *Swastica*. The Mexicans and the Peruvians had it, and it is found as the sacred Tau in the oldest tombs of Egypt.

It is, to say the least, a strange coincidence, remarked even by some Christian clergymen, that *Agnus Dei*, the Lamb of God, should have the symbols, identical with the Hindu God Agni. While *Agnus Dei* expiates and takes away the sins of the world, in one religion, the God *Agni* in the other, likewise expiates sins against the gods, man, the manes, the soul, and repeated sins; as shown in the six prayers accompanied by six oblations. (*Colebrooke—Essays*, Vol. I, p. 190.)

If, then, we find these two—the Cross and the Fire—so closely associated in the esoteric symbolism of nearly every nation, it is because on the combined powers of the two rests the whole plan of the universal laws. In astronomy, physics, chemistry, in the whole range of natural philosophy, in short, they always come out as the invisible cause and the visible result; and only metaphysics and alchemy—or shall we say *metachemistry*, since we prefer coining a new word to shocking skeptical ears?—can fully and conclusively solve the mysterious meaning. An instance or two will suffice for those who are willing to think over hints.

The Central Point, or the great central sun of the Kosmos, as the Kabalists call it, is the Deity. It is the point of intersection between the two great conflicting powers—the centripetal and centrifugal forces, which drive the planets into their elliptical orbits, that make them trace a cross in their paths through the Zodiac. These two terrible, though as yet hypothetical and imaginary powers, preserve harmony and keep the Universe in steady, unceasing motion; and the four bent points of the Swastica typify the revolution of the Earth upon its axis. Plato calls the Universe a "blessed god" *which was made in a circle and decussated in the form of the letter X*. So much for astronomy. In Masonry the Royal Arch degree retains the cross as the triple Egyptian Tau. It is the mundane circle with the astronomical cross upon it rapidly revolving; the perfect square of the Pythagorean mathematics in the scale of numbers, as its occult meaning is interpreted by Cornelius Agrippa. Fire is heat,—the central point; the perpendicular ray represents the male element, or spirit; and the horizontal one the female element—or matter. Spirit vivifies and fructifies the matter, and everything proceeds from the central Point, the focus of Life, and Light, and Heat, represented by the terrestrial fire. So much, again, for physics and chemistry, for the field of analogies is boundless, and Universal. Laws are immutable and identical in their outward and inward applications. Without intending to be disrespect-

ful to any one, or to wander far away from truth, we think we may say that there are strong reasons to believe that in their original sense the Christian Cross—as the cause, and Eternal torment by Hell Fire—as the direct effect of negation of the former—have more to do with these two ancient symbols than our Western theologians are prepared to admit. If Fire is the Deity with some heathens, so in the Bible, God is likewise the Life and the Light of the World; if the Holy Ghost and Fire cleanse and purify the Christian, on the other hand Lucifer is also Light, and called the "Son of the morning star."

Turn wherever we will, we are sure to find these conjoint relics of ancient worship with almost every nation and people. From the Aryans, the Chaldeans, the Zoroastrians, Peruvians, Mexicans, Scandinavians, Celts, and ancient Greeks and Latins, it has descended in its completeness to the modern Parsi. The Phœnician Cabiri and the Greek Dioscuri are partially revived in every temple, cathedral, and village church; while, as will now be shown, the Christian Bulgarians have even preserved the sun worship in full.

It is more than a thousand years since this people, who, emerging from obscurity, suddenly became famous through the late Russo-Turkish war, were converted to Christianity. And yet they appear none the less pagans than they were before, for this is how they meet Christmas and the New Year's day. To this time they call this festival Sourjvaki, as it falls in with the festival in honour of the ancient Slavonian God Sourja. In the Slavonian mythology this Deity—Sourja or Sourva,—evidently identical with the Aryan *Surya*—sun—is the god of heat, fertility, and abundance. The celebration of this festival is of an immense antiquity, as, far before the days of Christianity, the Bulgarians worshipped Sourva and consecrated New Year's day to this god, praying him to bless their fields with fertility, and send them happiness and prosperity. This custom has remained among them in all its primitive heathenism, and though it varies according to localities, yet the rites and ceremonies are essentially the same.

On the eve of New Year's day the Bulgarians do no work, and are obliged to fast. Young betrothed maidens are busy preparing a large *platiy* (cake) in which they place roots and young shoots of various forms, to each of which a name is given according to the shape of the root. Thus, one means the "house," another represents the "garden"; others again, the mill, the vineyard, the horse, a cat, a hen, and so on, according to the landed property and worldly possessions of the family. Even articles of value such as jewellery and bags of money are represented in this emblem of the horn of abundance. Besides all these, a large and ancient silver coin is placed inside the cake; it is called *bábka* and is tied two ways with a

red thread, which forms a cross. This coin is regarded as the symbol of fortune.

After sunset, and other ceremonies, including prayers addressed in the direction of the departing luminary, the whole family assemble about a large round table called *paralyá*, on which are placed the above mentioned cake, dry vegetables, corn, wax taper, and, finally, a large censer containing incense of the best quality to perfume the god. The head of the household, usually the oldest in the family—either the grandfather, or the father himself—taking up the censer with the greatest veneration, in one hand, and the wax taper in the other, begins walking about the premises, incensing the four corners, beginning and ending with the East, and reads various invocations, which close with the Christian "Our Father who art in Heaven," addressed to Sourja. The taper is then laid away to be preserved throughout the whole year, till the next festival. It is thought to have acquired marvellous healing properties, and is lighted only upon occasions of family sickness, in which case it is expected to cure the patient.

After this ceremony, the old man takes his knife and cuts the cake into as many slices as there are members of the household present. Each person upon receiving his or her share makes haste to open and search the piece. The happiest of the lot, for the ensuing year, is he or she who gets the part containing the old coin crossed with the scarlet thread; he is considered the elect of Sourja, and every one envies the fortunate possessor. Then in order of importance come the emblems of the house, the vineyard, and so on; and according to his finding, the finder reads his horoscope for the coming year. Most unlucky he who gets the cat; he turns pale and trembles. Woe to him and misery, for he is surrounded by enemies, and has to prepare for great trials.

At the same time, a large log which represented a flaming altar, is set up in the chimney-place, and fire is applied to it. This log burns in honour of Sourja, and is intended as an oracle for the whole house. If it burns the whole night through till morning without the flame dying out, it is a good sign; otherwise, the family prepares to see death that year, and deep lamentations end the festival.

Neither the *momtzee* (young bachelor), nor the *mommee* (the maiden), sleep that night. At midnight begins a series of soothsaying, magic, and various rites, in which the burning log plays the part of the oracle. A young bud thrown into the fire and bursting with a loud snap, is a sign of happy and speedy marriage, and *vice versa*. Long after midnight, the young couples leave their respective homes, and begin visiting their acquaintances from house to house, offering and receiving congratulations, and rendering thanks to the deity. These deputy couples are called the *Souryakari*, and each male carries a large branch ornamented with red ribbons, old

coins, and the image of Sourja, and as they wend along sing in chorus. Their chant is as original as it is peculiar and merits translation, though, of course, it must lose in being rendered into a foreign language. The following stanzas are addressed by them to those they visit.

Sôurva, Soûrva, Lord of the Season,
Happy New Year mayst thou send;
Health and fortune on this household,
Success and blessings till next year.

With good crops and full ears,
With gold and silk, and grapes and fruit;
With barrels full of wine, and stomachs full,
You and your house be blessed by the God. . .
His blessing on you all.—Amen! Amen! Amen!

The singing Souryakari, recompensed for their good wishes with a present at every house, go home at early dawn . . . And this is how the symbolical exoteric Cross and Fire worship of old Aryavarta go hand in hand in Christian Bulgaria. . . . .

H. P. BLAVATSKY

"Lift thy head, oh Lanoo; dost thou see one, or countless lights above thee, burning in the dark midnight sky?"

"I sense one Flame, oh Gurudeva, I see countless undetached sparks shining in it."

"Thou sayest well. And now look around and into thyself. That light which burns inside thee, dost thou feel it different in anywise from the light that shines in thy Brother-men?"

"It is in no way different, though the prisoner is held in bondage by Karma, and though its outer garments delude the ignorant into saying, 'Thy Soul and My Soul'."

The Secret Doctrine, Vol. I, p. 120.

SYNTHESIS

[**J. D. Beresford's** article suggests the intimate relation which exists between the synthesising process taking place in the mind of a single individual and his perception of the unity inhering in humanity and even in the whole of nature. One who has integrated himself, who has synthesised his different constituents, who has become whole, so that he is as one newly born, naturally sees Life as impartite, and humanity as one unit. Our author points to the last quarter of the nineteenth century as the period during which the spirit of division gave way to that of synthesis. Coincidently (!) we may point out that it was during that quarter that H. P. Blavatsky started her Theosophical Movement (in 1875) with its prime object of Universal Brotherhood ; wrote *Isis Unveiled* (1877) to expose the weakness of religious creeds which divide men, and the danger of specialization through which species of materialism—doubt, agnosticism and atheism—express themselves ; recorded her *Secret Doctrine* (1888)—the synthesis of science, religion, and philosophy ; gave to the world *The Key to Theosophy* (1889) so that aspirants may learn and teach in their turn ; and finally made the gift of *The Voice of the Silence*, which sings of the Path of Compassion, of Love Immortal and Impersonal.—EDS.]

One of the most obvious limitations of the average human mind is its natural tendency to specialisation and sectarianism. The principle of "one thing at a time," admirable enough, perhaps, from some points of view, leads inevitably in some cases to one thing all the time. Men adopt, at quite an early age as a rule, a profession, a political party, a religious belief, an attitude towards life, a taste for this or that, a particular hobby, and these objects of his adoption exercise an increasing influence upon his mentality and character as he comes to middle age. He can think more easily and surely upon the lines of his original choice,—though, indeed, in many cases, there has been no deliberate selection on his part. He has become familiar with all the methods and detail involved; and so he comes at last, a confirmed specialist within his own limitations, to see any subject presented to him only in the terms of his own activities, beliefs and personal tastes. If the subject be such that it cannot be included within this range, he rejects it as being "beyond him". He has narrowed his powers to the point at which they are no longer able to function on unfamiliar lines.

In the nineteenth century, now beginning to fall into a historical perspective that admits of new generalisations, this process of specialisation stands out as a distinctive mark of the common tendency of the period. In religion, in science, in politics, in the professions and trades, in the social orders, the developing process of civilisation worked by a splitting into sub-divisions, which might be likened to islands in a small archipelago, separated from, yet having comparatively easy communication with, the surrounding islands, but cut off by difficult stretches of ocean from the many other archi-

pelagos representing different habits of belief, thought, occupation, manners, even of speech. In the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century, if a man wished to emigrate from the archipelago in which he had been born, he had to begin his pilgrimage at an early age.

In religion this analysis into sects was and is still very active. The process which had begun, speaking broadly, in the Christian Religion by the separation of the Orthodox Eastern Church from Rome, had been followed by Protestantism, and continued by Nonconformity, developed all kinds of strange variants. The specialising influence of the time seemed to demand an increasingly stricter range of belief for different types not only of mind but of occupation, with an inevitable crystallisation of the original Spirit of Christianity upon any string that might be furnished by a particular reading of the letter. Also, since science and general knowledge were attracting to themselves a growing number of those who had hitherto departmentalised religion as a formal but comparatively uninteresting necessity of existence, the ranks of what were then known as "Atheists," were greatly augmented; and Atheism, Agnosticism or Materialism came by degrees to take place as the definite expression of a recognised attitude.

Beyond this, but keeping our attention still on the thought—as opposed to the social—levels of the time, science and general knowledge themselves were peculiarly specialised. Experimenters, researchers, professors and workers were expected to keep to their own school. Biology, physics, chemistry, geology, astronomy were studied for the most part as separate sciences, and it was believed that the more closely a student confined himself to his own study the greater were his chances of success. The enormous expansion of technical knowledge of every kind was such that it seemed impossible for anyone of average ability to do more than master the details of his own pursuit. A man might in his leisure exchange ideas with other islanders for his own archipelago, but all his work was done within the boundary of his own island.

It is still difficult to put a finger very precisely either upon what might be called the crisis of this process or upon the influences that are leading to its slow disintegration. In what is known as "exact knowledge," however, we can trace the evidence of a rapidly growing tendency for the various departments of science to overlap. Discoveries in pure physics had such an obvious bearing on chemistry upon one side and astronomy upon the other, that in the past generation the physicist may be either chemist or astronomer. The biologist had to come out of the dissecting-room to consult with the geologist. And, speaking generally, it would seem that all the more important scientific discoveries of the past fifty years have tended to throw light upon

departments of knowledge other than that in which they were originally made. Thus the liaison between the sciences grows more marked with every decade. It is as if the islands of this particular archipelago were drawing together to form a continent.

But what of the larger synthesis? For, this small instance of which I have been writing presents but one aspect of a movement that is, I believe, of the profoundest importance to the whole world. Are there any indications that in many other directions, also, this diastole of general expansion is changing to the systole of a general synthesis? Let me as an illustration quote from the extraordinarily able presidential speech of General Smuts to the Meeting of the British Association, held in London last Autumn, as reported in the *Times* of September 24.

Referring to his summary of the recent work done in science, General Smuts continued:—

> Among the human values thus created, science ranks with art and religion. . . . . More and more it is beginning to make a profound aesthetic and religious appeal to thinking people. Indeed, it may fairly be said that science is perhaps the clearest revelation of God to our age. . . . .
>
> While religion, art and science are still separate values they may not always remain such. Indeed, one of the greatest tasks before the human race will be to link up science with ethical values, and thus to remove grave dangers threatening our future. A serious lag has already developed between our rapid scientific advance and our stationary ethical development, a lag which has already found expression in the greatest tragedy of history.

And in his conclusion he suggested that "at the present cosmic epoch we are the spectators of what is perhaps the grandest event in the immeasurable history of our universe," a universe that he described as holistic, in which man "is in very truth the offspring of the stars".

Now General Smuts is, as we know, primarily scientific in his manner of thought, and I am not here asking readers of THE ARYAN PATH to regard these excerpts from a very long speech as representing an expression of the Inner Wisdom, nor even of my own views with regard to the coming place of science in human thought and development. But these quotations from an address made to an audience almost exclusively composed of scientists, undoubtedly represent a remarkable change of attitude towards the use and purpose of knowledge. We see that the effects of new discovery are in the direction of "holism," (a neologism, coined, I believe, by General Smuts himself a few years ago), defined in the New Oxford Dictionary as the "tendency in nature to form wholes that are greater than the sum of the parts by creative Evolution". We are given reasons for the belief,—to use for the last time a metaphor which can be pressed no further—that we must regard not only the islands of each archipelago as drawing together, but also the new continents that are thus formed. In short, I claim that all the evidence goes to prove that the great crisis was passed in

the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and that at that point the long processes of separation, specialisation, departmentalisation in knowledge and of sectarianism in religion, began to give place to the large synthetic movement that will eventually replace knowledge by wisdom.

I remember writing more than twenty years ago two articles for a London evening journal under the title of "Wanted: A Condenser". No copy of it exists now, so far as I know, and the journal in question, *The Westminster Gazette*, is no longer in being. But so far as my memory serves, I claimed even then that the expansion of learning could not be continued indefinitely, that presently all branches of it would necessarily overlap, and that it was possible in some distant age that all the knowledge of the world might be summed into a single sentence, or even a single word. At that time, I myself believed the idea to verge on the fantastic, —a belief which certain readers of the journal in question severely underlined in letters to the Editor —but, now, I realise that however immature that early essay of mine, it had its inspiration in some fragment of imperfectly recognised knowledge drawn from the deep well of truth.

But if we may now assume that in the future all departments of learning will become fused by slow degrees into the essential wisdom, which will itself become simplified and more inclusive as the spirit of man grows in strength and consciousness, we have still to consider what should be the purpose and desire of that average, specialised individual whom I took as my illustration at the beginning of this article.

For we are all, saving a few, a very few initiates and mystics, held very straightly in this grip of specialisation. We—and I emphatically include myself in this immense category—are constrained by that ideal of the self which we have both, consciously and unconsciously, cultivated from the first moment that we have been aware of our personal identity. Quite early in our lives we begin to limit that self by the adoption of points of view about this and that, and these early opinions whether derived from experience or accepted from an outside source, tend to harden and crystallise towards middle age so that they constitute for us the appearance of fundamental truths.

Nor does the fact that such beliefs may be in their nature essentially ethical and altruistic, avoid some, at least, of the limiting consequences of such a restriction. We may admire a man who devotes all his life to the service of humanity, and such a one is surely nearer to the true path than the man who lives principally for his own bodily satisfaction. But we cannot fail to realise,—I could instance cases from my own experience—that even this profession of altruism is not enough. It is not enough because in most cases the impulse does not spring from the right source, but is, in effect, a rigid

discipline, a form of asceticism imposed by the reason; and to act righteously is not the same thing as to love righteousness. And the mark of the failure in such modern ascetics is to be found in the fact that they do not grow in self-realisation. They experience no extension of consciousness, and I have known men who have lived such lives of self-sacrifice, become narrower and more fanatic in their old-age, victims to a form of specialisation.

The alternative to this is to avoid all those outgrowths of belief that harden into dogma; and Christ, one of the very greatest of the initiates, condensed all the commandments into the single direction "Love one another," an ideal that, if it is in its entirety too great for our present conception as a rule of life, carries implications that provide the surest direction towards the true path.

For Love is an aspect of that great synthesis of which I am writing. All its opposites, hate, jealousy, self-seeking,—our language is characteristically rich in synonyms for the thing that Love is not,—are aspects of division, separation, segregation, drawing apart. Love, in all its attributes, demands a drawing together, an inclusion, a simplification. But we must not confine it by our habit of specialisation. It is well to love simply and truly those who should naturally be dear to us. But we must extend our sympathies far beyond that tiny circle, if we are to play any part in the determination of the great synthesis that cannot include less than the whole of humanity.

J. D. BERESFORD

THE GIFT OF THE DHARMA

MAHAYANA BUDDHISM IN THE WEST

[**M. G. Mori** has many friends among our readers. The following article makes a very interesting suggestion about the Mahayana School of Buddhism. Eastern Esotericists and Occultists recognize the value of the School. H. P. Blavatsky's *The Voice of the Silence* throws great light on the pure Mahayana Teachings.—EDS.]

The educated Westerner . . . is attracted to Buddhism but . . . is a little bit inclined to find it rather too coldly intellectual for him. There are great numbers of people in the West who have lost all faith in the dogmas of Christianity, but who have not lost their yearning for something greater than themselves which they cannot define, and which they cannot find outside themselves. They come to Buddhism, finding its doctrines reasonable and attractive from an intellectual point of view, but they do not find that warmth, the really religious atmosphere they seek. That is to be found in mystical Buddhism: in the Mahayana doctrine of the indwelling Buddha.

Thus wrote an esteemed British Buddhist friend of mine in a personal letter which reached me late in 1930; and I take the liberty of quoting his remarks here as a piece of wise counsel to those of us Orientals who are not only interested in, but sincerely hope for, the spread of the Buddha Dharma in the West. Europe has made us the gift of a great material civilization, the benefits of which cannot, in justice, be denied merely on the ground of its evils. It is time that the East seriously cast about for some suitable present in return, and I for one suggest the noble gift of the Dharma. If gladly accepted and utilized with even half as much zeal as we in Japan have made use of their gift of material civilization, our spiritual gift will bring the Europeans immeasurable benefits without any of the evils that would accompany a more "substantial" present. It will cure them of the ultra-materialism which has brought them into their present predicament and lift them on to a higher plane of spirituality. That will prove a blessing not only to the white man himself but to the whole of humanity.

But as any gift will be all the more appreciated if it takes the form of that which its recipient has been feeling himself greatly in need, I think it both natural and legitimate for us to see to it that our gift of Buddhism should be in that shape which will most strongly appeal to the educated European of to-day. I should be the last man to suggest that we degrade or otherwise modify the teachings of the Buddha so as to make them agreeable to the average European of worldly ambitions. To do so indeed would be little short of suicidal for the true Buddhist cause. But it is well to remember, as I endeavoured to point out in my first article in this magazine (Vol. I, No. 1), that Buddhism has its "positive" or "constructive" side as well as its (apparently) negative side. To

some minds, indeed, the "negative" side may make its appeal as being really more "masculine," for it is on this side that Buddhism emphasizes that "man's destiny is in his own hands," so that "he can only save himself". Here we have atheism in the sense that Buddhism refuses to recognize any divine creator of the universe who can in some miraculous way control the fates of men and save or damn them at his own caprice. Those who have strong confidence in their powers of physical and spiritual endurance will, therefore, find this teaching manly and ennobling. The steeper and more rugged the peak, the greater will be its attraction for the blithe mountaineer.

The thoroughly intellectual and passionless outlook on life and the world—past, present and future—here outlined will perhaps also appeal to the pure "man of science" and all others who have formed the habit of looking at everything in the crystal light of reason. But most of us, whether Orientals or Occidentals, are not made of such stuff. We have our emotional side, and in many of us this predominates over the intellectual or volitional side. This is what makes us "human" in the common sense of the word, and whether we like it or not we have to accept this dual constitution of our temperaments as a fact. And here, I think, is the *raison d'être* of Mahayana Buddhism, with its "religious atmosphere" so congenial to the man of emotion. Here we have Buddhas and Bodhisattvas credited with super-human intelligence and powers. We have not only "deified" the Buddha Sakya-muni (Gautama), and "worship" him almost as a "divine" being, but also have such Tathagatas as Maha Vairoçana ("Dainichi") and Amitabha ("Amida"), who are (superficially, at least) akin to gods. The Buddha Amitabha, it is recorded in the sutras, created a "pure land" of his own and welcomes thither all men and women who trust him, "think of him with serene thoughts," and repeat his holy name a number of times. Here is an embodiment of an idea in Mahayana Buddhism that is dangerously near to the Christian conception of vicarious atonement, and it is little wonder that the sect (or sects) which lays its chief stress on this idea of salvation by faith should be at present the most powerful or prosperous in Japan.

The resemblance of certain phases of Mahayana Buddhism to Christianity, however, is said to be more apparent than real, more superficial than fundamental. With regard to the "deification" of the founder of Buddhism, Dr. J. Takakusu, one of the foremost Japanese authorities on Mahayana Buddhism, says:—

> In view of his lofty ideals, there can be no question but that Buddha was a personage possessed of super-human character, the greatest and noblest man the world has ever produced. Nevertheless, no true Buddhist recognizes him as a divine creator, a divine arbiter of man's destiny or a divine administrator of justice.

In regard to the worship of

Maha Vairoçana and Amitabha he writes:

> There might be any number of such Buddhas as Dainichi or Amida, but they were all different Buddhas, who were originally human beings and who later attained Buddhahood. And as a matter of fact, Buddhism has no other such representative Buddhas as Dainichi and Amida, these two representative Buddhas being nothing more or less than objective expressions of ideals possessed by Buddha in his mind. In short both of them are idealized Buddhas.

The statement, or rather admission, that Amitabha and Maha Vairoçana are merely "objective expressions" of the Buddha's ideals, may be found greatly disconcerting to those who would sincerely believe in them as their saviours (using "saviour" not necessarily in the usual Christian sense but in the more Buddhistic sense of one who *helps* others to save themselves). How can a Buddha who never really existed save mankind? Is it not a sort of superstition to believe in the existence of a being who never walked the earth? These queries raise problems of reality, existence, belief, etc. which cannot be disposed of in a short essay like this. Let me say, however, that the day is far gone by when men who were regarded as the foremost thinkers of their time refused to admit the existence of any but tangible things and imagined material existence to be the only form of reality.

We should remember, further, that Mahayana Buddhism itself clearly recognizes the great truth that it is our own minds that create the Buddhas. Nay, it goes further and reminds us that every man makes his own world. At a time when the tendency of philosophic thought in the west is clearly towards subjectivism, this Mahayanic idea of each man creating his own world should make a strong appeal to the thoughtful westerner.

But Buddhism, whether Mahayanic or Hinayanic, never confines itself to the subjective viewpoint. In his daily life the devout follower of the Amitabha sects in Japan reverences Amitabha with as much devotion as, or with even greater devotion than, his fellow Buddhist does the Buddha Sakyamuni himself. For him Amitabha actually lives in his Western Paradise, and the descriptions of Pure Land in the sutras are literal truths.

But why should Europeans, who have had a form of religion in some ways resembling the Amitabha sects of Buddhism, abandon their old faith and turn Buddhists. This query is answered partly by the quotation from the British friend's letter at the beginning of this article. They want a religion whose doctrines are "reasonable and attractive from an intellectual point of view". The tenets of even the most emotional Buddhist sects in Japan are based upon those great fundamental principles of Buddhism which are one and all the products of supreme intellect, or the wisdom of the Buddha.

M. G. Mori

THE GOOD LIFE

CONFLICT OF MORALS—OLD AND MODERN

[**Dr. Paul E. Johnson**, Professor of Philosophy at Hamline University (St. Paul, Minnesota) wrote in our June (1930) number on "Will West meet East?"—an article much talked about. In the present contribution he presents several Theosophical ideas and touches upon the power of Desire, which philosophers and moralists ask us to transmute, and yet without which unfoldment of human consciousness never is possible. In Eastern Esotericism the higher desires, which in and by themselves enable one to rise above earthly cravings, are three: (1) desire for the Spirit—Atman; (2) desire for the Knowledge of the Self—Brahma-Vidya or Theosophy; and (3) desire for the Fellowship of Holy Men—Sat-Sang, Good Company.—EDS.]

The good life is the chief concern of all who live. For this have men fought and found it not in strife, or toiled and lost it in fatigue. Of this have seers dreamed and declared it more than dream. In every form and circumstance life seeks to better its condition. This fact will be denied. The petulant may not want to be good, the lavish to have goods, nor the cynical to hope for good. And yet by some other name or route each goes in search of what he desires because it seems to him good. Even the ascetic who rejects desire and scorns his present life does so in hope of one that shall be better. So for better or for worse, life is ever pursuit of the good.

Pursuit of the good, in fact, is virtually inescapable. Long before moral questions come to conscious issue, life is everywhere so engaged. Elementary forms of life strive always toward what biologists call "the optimal condition," meaning that condition which is best for the organism. In the give and take of experience, all living things learn to improve their behaviour. By inherited tendency or acquired character life is loaded in the direction of the good. And when in the conscious level man begins to reason, there can be no doubt that his ingenuity gropes with the practical problem of bettering his present circumstance. Or if he turns from the practical to the more remote, he pictures a golden age or some future state of blessedness. And as the interests of family and tribe crystallize into custom and moral code, the aim is still to conserve the good.

It is of course evident that men do not agree on what is good. A sweeping glance across the boundaries of civilizations reveals disparities at every turn. It has been suggested that no vice has ever been condemned which at some time has not been praised as a virtue. By such contrasts we are encouraged here to question moral authorities, there to despair altogether of human efforts to know the good. Both problems deserve a hearing.

The comparative study of moral

codes has ventilated not a little our thinking on moral authority. To comprehend the social basis of morality unloads somewhat the exclusive claim to individual authority, whether human or divine. To find other groups as earnest about their moral customs as we are over ours may result in questioning the assumption that ours is the only morality. To see people living well under other moral standards may cause us to doubt that we are all right and the rest all wrong. When authorities disagree, who shall judge among them? When morals stand in conflict, who shall settle the dispute? If there are so many honest, yet contradictory opinions of the good, was Shakespeare right that there is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so?

Here the question of moral authority gives way to the question of moral knowledge. Whoever knows the good may be his own authority, but if the good cannot be known how shall we trust any authority? When there is added to conflicts among ancient morals the widespread confusion in our present-day morality, the situation becomes serious indeed. Is there no certainty anywhere? Must men give up all hope of knowing the good as vain conceit? Caution may here be the better part of valour. Whatever the claims to certainty or knowledge, they should at any rate be critically examined.

Let each man concerned in finding the good begin with his own experience. There is no one so unfortunate as to be denied some experience of good. To live at all is to experience certain goods, enough at least to keep alive. To live in the complex conditions of modern human society may consist of more goods than one can use, assimilate or even number. So whatever experience of good a life may possess, let us begin here and undertake to analyse. It might require more time and patience than we have to list in detail the goods of any life from food, shelter, and necessities of health to work, play, friendship and beauty. What we are looking for is that essential to all particular experiences of good. Is there nothing common to all enjoyment of the goods of life?

Yes, there is, and perhaps we have already stumbled upon it. For in asking if there is nothing common to all enjoyment of the goods of life, we have an answer before us in the very asking of the question. What is common to all is the *enjoyment* of something. In all experiences we call good, there is some satisfaction enjoyed. Even physical pain, as inflicted by the ascetic upon himself or endured by the faithful in discharging his duty, may be enjoyed. This coincidence of satisfaction with every good has led many to conclude that the good is happiness, and none other. In some quarters, happiness is seen as mere quantity of pleasure; in others, the quality of the satisfaction is what the good demands. It is even urged that happiness or pleasant feeling is so over-

powering a motive that it is the only end life is able to choose.

Evidently we have come upon an important element common to all experiences approved as good. But it is a half-truth to take a pleasant feeling as the whole of any good. A good feeling is part of the realization of every good, but only a part. A grin without a face is quite as probable as that pleasure is the good. For pleasure and pain are symptoms, like bodily temperature, of organic conditions, good or bad. Satisfaction is not an abstract emotion or detached nervous thrill. Something must be satisfied, and that something is organic need. Something must be accomplished, and that something is the well-being that makes life good.

From the standpoint of human life, therefore, the good is that which adequately fulfils human need. We call that evil which betrays human life, degrades or destroys it. Disease is evil in that it brings us to decay and destruction. Deceit is evil in that it brings us to error and misunderstanding. But health is good because it enables us to exercise our normal powers, and honesty is good because it leads us to truth and appropriate action in the light of the truth. As each organ has its own function to perform, so every man has his own end or aim to fulfil. That is to say that the whole life of a man is meant for something, to do and to be in certain ways that will fulfil the law of his being. This end or aim of every life is its particular good, (as Socrates would say) and only conduct organized to that end is good conduct. The good is that which satisfies our needs in the most effective way, thus becoming at once the end and means of our best development.

We must not be deceived, however, by the double use of the word "end". One use (the most common in fact) employs "end" to mean final, closed, after which there is none other, as when in reading a story we come to the last page and close the book. The other use (the one we have been employing) signifies the aim or purpose of behaviour, the goal towards which one is striving, or function one endeavours to fulfil. Now the sense in which we have been using this second meaning excludes the finality of the first meaning. The good which constitutes the end of our conduct is endless. It must not be closed or finished else it betrays life, and is no longer good. For life is a growing thing, and whatever meets life's need must also grow. It might also be said that the end or aim of life is growth. At least life's good is a growing good. The child's arm or leg that fails to grow is useless and worse. The mentality that fails to grow is imbecile. Arrested development is life defeated.

So we may add to our former statement this—the good is that which develops and enlarges human needs. In fact this is the only way that our needs can be adequately fulfilled. For the ful-

filment of growth is exactly the enlarging of capacities, the development of new and higher needs. The needs of so advanced an animal as the ape are very few. But the arrival of man brings a whole range of new interests and wants, while each advance in civilization is the outcome of fresh demands and larger appreciations. It is no service to a child to fixate his affection upon the parent to the exclusion of younger friends. It is no good to a society to crystallize loyalty around old traditions to the exclusion of newer ideals and ambitions. For in this over-anxiety to conserve past good comes arrested development and stunted progress. The good must not be enemy to the better, but demonstrate its saviourhood by saving not itself. To shatter old contentments, to add new wants to the former ones, to create larger demands and develop new hungers is essential to any adequate fulfilment of human needs.

> Then welcome each rebuff
> That turns earth's smoothness rough
> That bids nor sit nor stand but go!

The urge to go is hot upon us in this western hemisphere. Our nerves are set for action and it is not hard to convince ourselves that we ought to go somewhere. But in all our going we are apt to miss growing. When we view evolution as a thin line of advance, and think of progress as a forward march, we are almost sure to invite the illusion of growth in linear terms. We frequently speak of progress as "pushing on" and development as "getting ahead". But the quality of life is not to be measured by tape-lines or even foot-pounds. The expansion of life-capacities is more subtle than our most refined measurements. Mere size means nothing, for the most delicate organs are often the most minute. In structure, it is proportion; and in behaviour, it is co-ordination that counts. The mileage covered, the distance gained is beside the point, and it is often in this way that we defeat ourselves. For in getting ahead, we get askew and let fall behind at other vital points. By over-reaching ourselves, we lose our balance and crash.

The end of all life is harmonious completion. And by this we do not mean the completion of a final end, but completion of endless fulfilment. Maturity is the completion of adolescence, just as adolescence is of childhood, but neither is normally the finish. Each development completes or fulfils the previous beginnings and goes on to the next. And the good life consists in harmonious completion. It is balanced, well-proportioned, and co-ordinated. It is complete in all human values. Success, as we popularly acclaim it, is often a mockery upon the good life. For the so-called successful man is usually one who has "gotten ahead" in some specialized task to the neglect of life's other values. The man who makes a million dollars and fails to buy culture with them, the woman who wins a career and wrecks a home, the artist who loves beauty and despises his fellowman, the

social worker who serves the poor and neglects her health, are typical examples of empty successes. The unbalanced life often passes for the good life, but in reality it is like the house built on sand.

Who then is good? There was a teacher whom men have for twenty centuries called good, who when so addressed refused the honour, reserving it for the Divine Ideal, the goal of human striving. More recently an ardent idealist declared man in the vision of the superman a sore shame. The good life on our plane forever aims at completion and is never complete, strikes for harmony and plays often discord. The good institution, for example, the family, may be made in heaven (as our mothers and fathers believed) but the last disagreement or misunderstanding is not yet banished from the human home. The good civilization, whether tested in the discipline of ages or hopeful in the glow of early ambitions, is not yet perfect. In the light of the ideal, we all stand condemned as individuals, institutions or cultures. But there is no cause for despair. Human needs are growing restlessly, insatiably larger and larger, perhaps higher and higher. We want more than our fathers did. Too often these wants are childish and petulant or superficial and mistaken. But without wanting there is no having. It is difficult to see how even the Buddha could have enlightenment without wanting it. Desire is not always bad, any more than it is always good. Desires are bad that defeat human success in its true greatness. Desires are good that seek to fulfil human nature at its best. As hunger is the normal requisite to nourishment, so desire is prerequisite to growth.

If these impulsive and unruly human desires can be educated to seek only the best, their power will become effective goodness. Not by external control or the restraint of Plato's charioteer is progress most steadily won. Our hope lies rather in the control of inner poise, the clear-eyed patience that seeing visions eternal frets not that the road is long.

PAUL E. JOHNSON

NEW BOOKS AND OLD

WESTERN KNOWLEDGE *

[**Geoffrey West** contrasts Eastern and Western knowledge in this able review.—EDS.]

This is an important book. It can scarcely be reviewed, but it should be read as widely as possible, certainly by every would-be intelligent person. Inevitably it has omissions, yet it is not inadequate to its ambitious title if the special significance of "modern," and the essential limitation of "outline," are properly appreciated. Perhaps Western Knowledge would have been a better phrase, yet the knowledge of the East *is* primarily an Ancient Wisdom, and while Western knowledge looks back to Aristotle and to Protagoras who proclaimed man to be the measure of all things, still it is mainly in the last three hundred years that the great body of cumulative fact and theory specifically to be designated modern has come into being.

Within the covers of this book the principal departments of that knowledge are described, in twenty-four articles by twenty-two experts, in outline indeed but without essential omission *so far as they go.* The qualification is important, as will appear. Each article, on an average, consists of rather more than twenty thousand words, and with one or two exceptions each outlines the past history of its subject before embarking on an exposition of present views and their relation to the life and thought of to-day. Each is the work of a man sufficiently at home in his own field to achieve clarity without undue simplification. There is no condescension to the reader. Naturally the articles are not all of equal merit, but the best are altogether admirable—as Professor R. A. Sampson on Astronomy, Sir J. Arthur Thomson on Biology, Dr. F. Aveling on Psychology, Dr. R. R. Marett on Anthropology, Mr. G. D. H. Cole on Industrial Organisation, and again on Political Organisation, Dr. C. Delisle Burns on International Organisation, and Professor Lascelles Abercrombie on Literary Criticism—and even from those others most open to criticism a discriminating reader will learn much and continuously. With a full sense of the book's limitations, I would urge it as a valuable possession to both West and East. A world in which every one had read and assimilated it might not necessarily be a better world, but it would be a more hopeful one.

I at least, as a Westerner, cannot fail to be impressed by

* *An Outline of Modern Knowledge.* Edited by Dr. William Rose (Gollancz, 8*s.* 6*d.*)

the sheer achievement it records. Decry it as you wish—the achievement, that is—and still its aim, its ambition, remains magnificent. This knowledge is a human knowledge, built with human intellect from a human foundation. Starting, in effect, from little more than Descartes' bare affirmation, "I think, therefore I am," it has brought into being by brain and eyes and hands a surely marvellous vision of a coherent universe, in astronomy reaching out to unmeasured depths of time and space, in biology laying bare the physical, in psychology and psycho-analysis the mental and emotional, processes of organic being, in archæology and anthropology harking back to human beginnings, in history, economics and political science studying social organisation and development, in the arts revealing cultural growth, in physics analysing matter itself, and in philosophy questioning the nature of knowledge and even of reality. The scope and bulk and detail of the resultant knowledge, as set forth in these pages, seem to me to constitute an amazing feat of discovery and definition, so concrete in appearance that it is difficult to hold in mind the hypothetical, subjective nature of much of it. I cannot but salute it, even as I question it. At least it may be claimed for it that, after its own fashion, it works. In every sphere it has been applied with remarkable skill to give Western man his acknowledged material mastery, to win ever-increasing earthly riches, to give him not merely worldly dominion but understanding (of a kind) of land and sea and sky, of his past, his present, and his future.

Yet, in the face of that miracle, something seems radically wrong. Few things are clearer than the inability of the West to use its knowledge for concerted human good. It falls very far short of the reality to call Western man non-spiritual; mostly he simply does not know the meaning of the term. How apposite even to-day —perhaps more than ever to-day, though written nearly thirty years ago—is Mr. Lowes Dickinson's imaginary *Letters from a Chinese Official*, a small volume with which every student of East and West should be acquainted. The supposedly Chinese writer of these letters acknowledges the achievement of the West, but sees clearly that "the most brilliant discoveries, the most fruitful applications of inventive genius, do not of themselves suffice for the well-being of society". That is but too patent in the secular West, which having sold its soul for power, has given full freedom to uncontrolled political and economic forces, and in a single century has "dismantled your whole society".

> Property and marriage, religion, morality, distinctions of rank and class, all that is most important and profound in human relationships, has been torn from the roots and floats like wreckage down the stream of time. . . . . Your legislation for the past hundred years is a perpetual and fruitless effort to regulate the disorders of your economic system. . . . . You have dissolved all human and personal ties, and you endeavour, in vain, to replace them by the imper-

sonal activity of the State. The salient characteristic of your civilisation is its irresponsibility. You have liberated forces you cannot control; you are caught yourself in your own levers and cogs.

The indictment is only too true. Irresponsibility, lack of control—the Siamese-twin characteristics of Western civilisation, wombed in the blackness of utter lack of spiritual knowledge or purpose. Science, for all its probings, has no word, no light. Naturalistic, it begins at the bottom of the ladder with the simple secular fact of individual cognition, and works upward as best it may. It does not know where it is going; it moves forward blindly. Its foundation is, not man's divine character, but his identity with a world of nature from which divinity is expressly excluded. Rejecting the wisdom of those on higher planes, crying down their knowledge from above, necessarily it quarrels with religion. The power of unadulterated naturalism seemed at its greatest towards the end of the nineteenth century; it proclaimed a world of deterministic mechanism, wherein man was but one undistinguished cog. To-day the tide has receded a little. There is a reaction towards religion. Einstein has demolished some of that mechanistic basis, if without setting anything as solid in its place. Discoveries in physics too have seemed to lift a little the nightmare burden of absolute determinism, so that Mr. Sullivan can declare free will at least an equally valid hypothesis, and less cautious writers go a good deal farther. Even Dr. Rose, the editor of this volume, states: "The whole outlook has changed and is changing. The materialistic and mechanistic views of last century, encouraged and strengthened by the biological discoveries of Darwin, are giving place to speculations which are in danger of falling into the abyss of mysticism."

Such speculations, it would appear from these pages, are not to be regarded as in themselves scientific. The more general admission is rather that science, in stealing the thrones of philosophy and religion, has exceeded its function. Science, it is said, tells us only of structure, not nature, it is quantitative not qualitative, and, Mr. Sullivan suggests, "there is no real reason to suppose that everything science neglects is less real than what it accepts". Thenceforward one notes with increasing interest the manner in which this recognition of the extra-scientific realities is echoed in certain of these essays, especially those on Biology, Psychology, and Anthropology. A few sentences from the first of these, by Sir Arthur Thomson, stressing what he aptly terms Psycho-Biology, may well be quoted as indicating the wiser attitude of the liberal scientist:

It must be clearly understood that scientific naturalistic *description* does not imply what is called philosophical naturalism, which denies the validity of all transcendental or spiritual *interpretation*. For while science answers the questions *What?* *Whence?* and *How?* it never even asks the question *Why?* In other words, science does not raise

the philosophical or religious question of the meaning, significance or purpose behind the world of the measurable... The biologist, as biologist, dredges in the sea of reality with nets of a certain kind of mesh (his biological methods) and is naturally restricted to the capture of certain kinds of fishes...If he has arranged the meshes of his net so that they will only catch metabolism, he cannot expect to discover Mind in his sea. None the less, he may be well aware of it, and thus become psycho-biologist.

He himself finds mind everywhere from the amœba upwards, and seems to regret the slowness of others to accept the psycho-biological point of view. Dr. Aveling, in dealing with Psychology, notes the evident swing "in contemporary thought from materialistic and physiological explanations of mental phenomena to spiritualistic and purely psychological ones". Dr. Marett on Anthropology is even more suggestive. Science, he agrees, is concerned with bare facts, not ultimate values. Yet from the bare facts of anthropology we cannot fail to draw conclusions of quantitative and qualitative progress. And even though scientifically we "are on firmer ground when we take stock of ourselves as evolved animals than as undeveloped angels," still it remains true that

as far back as we can trace him, Man appears a visionary who has lived on an overdraft and traded on credit. Since, therefore, something infinite attaching to his notion of good has hitherto helped him on his way, it might well seem sound policy on his part to continue steadfastly to imagine the divine, and to treat it as the only true measure of the human.

Surely here we see Western scientists reaching out in a wiser way towards understanding than in the staunchly naturalistic philosophic and scientific summaries of Professor Wolf, or in the Rev. W. R. Matthews' notably unsatisfying essay on "The Idea of God," which is all too evidently biased by a Christian belief. Yet one great difficulty remains inherent in the very bulk of the knowledge science has accumulated. Like its own drawing of the divergent evolutionary tree of life, it branches ever wider and wider at every stage of its analytic progress, each science detaching itself from the others and then dividing and sub-dividing within itself until even in the limited field of history Professor Hearnshaw looks forward apprehensively to a time when it will be impossible for any one man to bring all the new knowledge together and distil a coherent philosophy from it, and Dr. Rose, surveying the whole field, sees the prospect of a final universal synthesis growing ever more remote.

Yet synthesis—spiritual synthesis—there must be if the West is not to involve not only itself but the whole world in possibly irretrievable disaster. These tentative scientific liberalisms are not in themselves enough. The West is hungry for illumination, and if the "abyss of mysticism" into which Dr. Rose suggests it may fall is to be an uninstructed mysticism, then indeed it may prove the danger he suggests. It is one criticism of this book that it makes all too little attempt to fore-

stall that peril by providing, or pointing to, adequate instruction, though what it lacks is only what Western science as a whole does and must for some time continue to lack: a synthesis which will bring science back into relation with philosophy and religion, and strike a true balance and harmony between the spiritual and naturalistic, the Eastern and Western, approaches to knowledge. How that might be achieved would need an article, or a series of articles, even to suggest. Theosophists, however, will be unable not to regard it as significant that among the more than five thousand index entries which conclude the volume, neither Theosophy nor Mme. Blavatsky has even the barest reference.*

Promised an outline, it is perhaps unreasonable to complain that we are not given a synthesis, though one, surely, should be inherent in the other. The wise reader will learn from this book much, for he will not suppose that he is learning all. But indeed he would be a fool who took it for his scripture, and treated it as an end rather than as a beginning, and an ill-balanced beginning at that.

GEOFFREY WEST

MACHINERY AND THE SOUL OF MAN †

THE INDIAN POINT OF VIEW

[**R. M. Fox** is the author of *The Triumphant Machine* which attracted a great deal of attention in England and America. His first section on "Mass Production" in this book is used as a University Text-book on Industrialism in California and is listed as an authority on the subject. His latest volume *Drifting Men* deals with British Prison life as seen by a conscientious objector.

Mr. Fox is a contributor to *The Hibbert Journal*, *The Nineteenth Century*, *The Fortnightly Review* and other periodicals. At present he is engaged on the new Irish National Daily *The Irish Press*. His work has been "to write of the modern machine order from the standpoint of one who has spent several years as a factory worker".

He specialised on Industrial Psychology at Oxford and spent some months in Russia lecturing at the Far-Eastern University.—EDS.]

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* Not quite. Theosophists from H. P. Blavatsky downwards have been aware that scientists have their own pride, prejudices and predilections, and that fanaticism is not the special weakness of the religionist only. They have also been aware that many of the most advanced truths of science are but echoes of ancient teachings to be found in literature from the time of the Hindu Vedas down to H. P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*. Scientists can and do ignore Theosophy and H. P. Blavatsky but Karma smiles as year by year books of science proclaim as fresh and new that which was taught by her as old truth some fifty years ago. But ever is wisdom justified of her children.—EDS.

† *The Wheel of Fortune* by M. K. Gandhi.
On Khaddar by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya (G. A. Natesan, Madras.)

No one can adequately discuss human society to-day without considering the place of the machine and its influence on men and women. Problems of unemployment, war and peace, national freedom, social stability and individual happiness are bound up with these iron monsters.

The machine age has brought with it all kinds of mechanistic standards and utilitarian judgments which constitute an ever-widening breach with older traditions. The difference between Western theorists of the nineteenth century —such as Robert Owen and Fourier—and the revolutionaries of to-day, is largely a matter of the industrial technique of the era. The French Revolution, emphasising liberty, equality and fraternity—for the individual—corresponds to a period of small workshops, skilled craftsmen, independent merchants. Nineteenth-century Britain produced its individualist thinkers—Adam Smith and Bentham—who gave the rising factory lords and merchants their battle cries. The Russian Revolution, with its mass conceptions, obliterating the individual corresponds to mass production which does the same.

Twentieth-century industry—in the West—is all-absorbing and all-pervading. Its belts and pulleys are the driving forces of busy towns and remote villages. Palaces and parliaments respond to the throb and whirr of its countless wheels. Increasingly it shapes our lives and settles our opinions. As men grow conscious of its force they accept it or resent it strongly, dividing themselves into camps for and against the machine.

The question of how far the machine may be used with advantage appears capable of clear practical demonstration. A solid, shining machine is hardly a matter of philosophic disputation. Once it is in motion it should put an end to all controversy. When we have seen its results we should surely be able to decide whether it is worth while or not. Yet the inexorable certainty of the machine—the logic of machine processes—has the effect of pushing out of the human consciousness all standards of judgment which do not fit in with machine calculations.

Machine standards are preeminently those of rapid production. The only effective difference between machines is that one works faster than another at lower running costs. People are now being judged by the same standard, their lives, hopes and happiness being regarded as quite irrelevant, matters which only a hopelessly impractical person would consider. The application of such machine standards to people indicates how far we have come under the sway of the machine idea and have allowed it to penetrate our souls. To the machine mind such characters as Joan of Arc, Terence MacSwiney or Gandhi are quite incomprehensible as too are those great gusts of national feeling which still sweep through the world.

Economic troubles are imper-

vious to machine logic because this is a foreshortened logic which stops short of real solutions. It takes no account of underlying human needs. The machine can turn out boots but it can give no guidance on what should be done with the boots. It will use up energy but can give no guidance as to when the mind and body of the human agent tending it require change, rest and refreshment. The machine is non-moral, non-intellectual, non-spiritual—in other words, it is mechanical. The chaos of the modern world is largely centred in the attempt to arrive at mechanical solutions of spiritual and human problems.

We are not faced with problems of production—in spite of what our wise men say—but with problems of greed. In this issue of nobility and fair-dealing versus villainy and over-reaching, machine calculations can have no place, for they never reach the real issue. Western mechanical thought is pitiful in its lack of depth, its cocksure shallowness of mind. Rattling on with a slick efficiency it never guesses that the real problems are beyond its reach. Sometimes it is suggested that the soul of the machine has overwhelmed the soul of man. But machine and soul belong to different, if not antithetical, spheres. It is true that the world is largely non-moral and non-intellectual in its economic relations because it has accepted machine limitations and bears the stamp of the machine.

In the East a counter-tendency rises—revealed in the writings of Gandhi—and attaining expression in his book *The Wheel of Fortune*. A critic, attacking his advocacy of hand-loom weaving, from a Western standpoint, writes:—

> The real question for consideration with us (in India) . . . is not whether the handloom will or will not be able to hold its own against the power loom . . . but which will contribute to the economic and political power of a nation.

Here we find the critic obsessed with the idea of power—a machine conception. Gandhi puts the other view:—

> It is not quite clear from the above what the notions of the correspondent are about the economic and political power of this country. We cannot imagine him to seriously believe—though his argument runs as if he does—that that power can be achieved without feeding and clothing the millions of our half-starving and half-naked men, women and children. The political and economic power of a nation depends even in this "age of mechanical industrialism" not on its powerful machines but on its powerful men.

Here the issue that we must all face is met squarely. The test of a system is what happiness, comfort and life it can offer to human beings. Gandhi explains that eighty per cent of India's population spend more than six months in the year in enforced idleness, in miserable poverty. The spinning wheel, simple and inexpensive, would provide them with food and occupation. When the power loom came in Britain in the nineteenth century, hand-loom weavers starved. No Gandhi urged his countrymen to

buy their goods. Instead economic thinkers assured the country that production must not be interfered with. "In the long run," they asserted, "the situation will right itself. Leave it to the machine!" So the handloom weavers starved because the chief consideration was to keep the machines running. It is the chief consideration to-day. Shall we have mechanical efficiency at the cost of human agony? The West says "Yes". Gandhi says "No". It is a question of the relative value of the machine and the human soul.

Reading a later booklet, *On Khaddar*, by Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya we learn the story of the forcible destruction of India's village industries. This natural expression of the life of the people was crushed out, leading to a general lowering of tone, to idleness and dissipation, in place of former pride in skill and happy craftsmanship. The revival of hand-spinning in India is not advocated purely as a means of providing food but also because it inculcates ideas of self-respect and skilful industry which help to make life happier and fuller. Without entering upon an examination of this it is sufficient to note that here, too, the well-being of the individual, material, mental and spiritual, holds first place. Where, in the West, are industrial developments put to a similar test?

The machine passed over India like a scythe over a field—even though it was operated from Lancashire. But the *On Khaddar* booklet shows the grass and flowers springing to life again through that invincible life impulse which is beyond the machine's reach. The destruction of village industries took the happiness out of Indian homes, bringing starvation and desolation of soul. With the hum of the spinning wheel, comfort, laughter and skill are returning to those homes. Gandhi writes of the spinning wheel:—

> I claim for it the properties of a musical instrument, for whilst a hungry and a naked woman will refuse to dance to the accompaniment of a piano, I have seen women beaming with joy to see the spinning wheel work, for they know that they can, through that rustic instrument, both feed and clothe themselves.

Again—from a Western standpoint—what interests me is the absence of a mechanical approach. Do we ever concern ourselves with the problem of whether a certain form of production means more happiness? We have only to ask the question to see how far we have drifted from human considerations in our present productive order.

Gandhi summarises his attitude in *The Message of the Charka* when he says:—

> It is my claim that as soon as we have completed the boycott of foreign cloth, we shall have evolved so far that we shall necessarily give up the present absurdities and remodel national life in keeping with the ideal of simplicity and domesticity implanted in the bosom of the masses. We will not then be dragged into an imperialism, which is built upon the exploitation of the weaker races of the earth and the acceptance of a giddy materialistic civilisation protected by naval and air forces that have made peaceful living almost impossible.

On the contrary we shall then refine that imperialism into a commonwealth of nations which will combine, if they do, for the purpose of giving their best to the world and of protecting, not by brute force but by self-suffering, the weaker nations or races of the world.

Here is the counter-stroke to the mechanical tendency, nothing less than an attempt from the East to restore nobility to the soul of man. Let it be understood that it is not the machine, as such, which is objected to, it is the glorification of the machine at the expense of humanity. It is a demand that the balance shall be restored. To rob the machine of its power for evil it must be stripped of its glamour and looked at simply as a thing of iron and steel to be used for definite limited ends. The truth about the machine is that it is neither good nor bad. Virtue or vice lies purely in its use or misuse. It has no standards to give humanity.

As mechanical contrivances are used more and more in the home we get a saner view of them. A woman at home is not dazzled by huge factories; roaring machines eating up metal and men; black chimneys pouring out smoke. The home idea of a machine is of a vacuum cleaner which may be used, without veneration, to save effort. So far in the factories the machine has not necessarily meant reduced effort for the operatives. Often it means increased effort, more drudgery and insecurity. If the use of a vacuum cleaner meant that a woman instead of cleaning so many square yards of carpet with a broom had to clean so many square miles with the vacuum cleaner, her brain might begin to reel. In the home the individual is always the centre but in the factory men have become tools.

Our growing dependence on machinery makes it difficult to understand the limitations of the machine. The machine enthusiasts shout too loudly. The machine pressure on our lives produces machine mysticism. The "Ford" conveyor system, where the motor car starts as a few pieces of metal and moves along accumulating parts till it is driven off at the other end with its own power, is our industrial civilization in miniature. We are all connected with those moving belts which determine how we shall work and how we shall spend our leisure. We dare not offend these metal monsters, by which we live, so we devise rationalisation schemes to keep them running whatever the human cost. We fail even to do this because we leave out of account the human side of the equation. Our lives are at the mercy of the changes the machines bring. They move forward like dread figures of Destiny inspiring feelings of devotion and awe. From such feelings comes the widespread conviction that the world must be planned on machine lines and that everything which does not fit in with the machine must go. Why should we keep the unemployed alive is the underlying unspoken question—they are not necessary to the machine! But

it is necessary through all the confusion and conflict of industrial transition to keep a firm grip on those human values which alone give meaning to life.

Throughout the centuries and the seasons, the tree of Life has flowered. Its blossoms of genius, of art, of literature, like those of simple happiness, have not ceased to appear because of human folly. The deep-lying stream of tradition, welling from some hidden source, flows on, watering its roots. The machine is clamorous to-day because it has not found its place in the human scheme. We are not the only generation which has pushed its way up from those ancient roots. We are not the last. The machine will not stifle humanity. The soul of man will survive. The decision is not in our hands.

R. M. Fox

Science and Religion: *A Broadcast Symposium.* (Gerald Howe, Ltd., London. 4*s.* 6*d.*)

This is a symposium made from a series of broadcast talks by eminent scientists and religious leaders. Science bases its whole knowledge on three principles, *viz.* Uniformity, Continuity and Evolution. It regards Nature as a whole, a homogeneity, showing absence of caprice, presence of the inevitableness of consequence, of general trustworthiness, and, lastly, progress. This the leaders of religious thought in the west—who for nearly two thousand years have eliminated reason from the realm of religion and made men blind to the necessity of *true* religion—hail as the most "striking evidence of the steadfastness of the mind of God". To the students of Theosophy, the objection to the concept of an anthropomorphic God is that not only is it not true, but also that it is frivolous. With the exception of Prof. L. P. Jacks the speakers have said nothing on the "subject of soul evolution" or shown a Way of Life which every soul is capable of treading by self-discipline, self-examination, self-control and self-energization. Thus there is little guidance given for the attainment of *real knowledge.*

Not till Science and Religion recognise and accept the fundamental principles of Archaic Wisdom, which have the strength of universality, consistency and constancy, will there be any understanding between them. H. P. Blavatsky gives these principles in *Isis Unveiled,* II, p. 124.

1. Everything existing, exists from natural causes.

2. Virtue brings its own reward, and vice and sin their own punishment.

3. The state of man in this world is probationary.

We might add that on these three principles rested the universal foundation of every religious creed.

A study of ancient Theosophy which is an elaboration of these fundamentals will give a true and correct answer to the "tragic agnosticism" of Prof. Malinowski and to any scientific problems or religious questions.

B. Sc.

Raja-Yoga or Occultism. By H. P. BLAVATSKY (The Theosophy Company [India], Ltd., 51 Esplanade Road, Bombay.)

It was a happy thought which inspired the gathering together into a handy little volume a selection of twelve of those half-forgotten but vital essays of Madame Blavatsky, which hold an appeal rather for "the few" than for those whose interest in Theosophy is of a more academical character. The publishers of THE ARYAN PATH, in making available this collection, have rendered signal service to those more ardent souls for whom Theosophy means something more than arid philosophical speculation upon the origin and nature of the cosmos, and kindred forms of intellectual gymnastics. Not, be it understood, that these are without their value; for, after all, as the sun is reflected within the humble dewdrop, so, in man, the microcosm, is reflected every aspect of the eternal macrocosm. Where the spiritually unilluminated intellect alone succeeds in building a philosophical edifice in which it is liable to fall a victim to the mistake of worshipping the shadow of itself as it is cast upon the walls of its prison-house, those nobler souls, in whom are found united a keen intelligence with a glowing love of the Eternal, discover, beyond the limits of the separated self, however intellectually refined, the boundless spiritual Ether in which alone the untrammelled Spirit has its home.

How different is the true Occultism of H. P. B. from the popular conception may be gauged from what is perhaps the most notable essay here reprinted—that entitled *Occultism v. the Occult Arts*—in which it is stated that "True Occultism is the 'great renunciation of self,' unconditionally and absolutely, in thought as in action." Renunciation! Sacrifice! No promise of power! Is the prospect too repellent? Not for those who "open their souls to the Eternal," and, in Its light and warmth, unfold with the unconscious beauty of the flower.

As the anonymous writer of the able and illuminative preface to this little work points out: "Most students of Theosophy are not ready to practise this true Occultism, but all are in a position theoretically to study the problems connected with the Divine Science." Let them take to heart the warning given by H. P. B. in her essay on *Chelas and Lay Chelas*, in connection with the hidden perils of the Path. "We call to mind several sad failures within a twelvemonth," she writes; and the enumeration of the instances indeed brings home the conviction of the reality of the struggle in which the aspirant must inevitably find himself at one time or other involved. It may be deferred, but ultimately may not be evaded.

Again, in *Practical Occultism*, reprinted from *Lucifer* of May, 1888, the stringent requirements attending the status of "accepted chela" are outlined, with the result that the impossibility in the present conditions of Western civilization of becoming anything but a "lay chela" is forcibly brought home to the mind. Little wonder that the essay called forth correspondence from despairing aspirants to adeptship! Some comments of H. P. B. upon these letters have also been included, increasing considerably the value of the article itself. "One may study with profit the Occult Sciences," Madame Blavatsky remarks on one occasion, "without rushing into the higher Occultism"—in which connection another sentence equally pertinent may with advantage here be quoted:

> If one cannot, owing to circumstances of his position in life, become a full adept in this existence, let him prepare his mental luggage for the next, so as to be ready at the first call when he is once more reborn.

It is the incapacity to take the longer view which reveals the average inquirer as not yet ready to undertake the serious study of true Occultism. In the vast sweep of the evolutionary cycle, involving many incarnations before the task of spiritual unfoldment is completed, what is the relative value or importance of the karma of one short life? The intuition to perceive the fact that

the circumstances of life are the result of no arbitrary providence, but are as inevitably attached to ourselves as is our physical shadow, and in no way to be got rid of until that which casts the shadow is lost in the light of the Spirit, is one of the most valuable qualities which can be brought to bear upon that greatest of all problems—the problem of conquering one's own "human nature". This, in the long run, each man must do for himself. There is nothing under heaven, "nothing that is out of the Eternal," which can do it for him. "The path winds uphill all the way." There is no easy road—nothing to be had which has not been *earned*. It is impossible at this point to forbear from quoting further from the valuable preface to this volume:

> There are students, now as in the earlier days of the Movement, who are the victims of their own enthusiasm of ignorance. They are susceptible to the blandishments of the short and easy path. They fall prey to the promise of quick results made to them. They are practitioners of the ignoble art of getting something for nothing. They are ready to rush headlong into the laboratory of Nature's arcanum, lay hold on any of her secret apparatus, swallow at a gulp any prescription offered. The price they have paid for entrance is a frightful one—the sacrifice of their commonsense. The price to be paid is still more terrible—the sacrifice and loss of the evolution of the Soul. Fools still rush in where angels fear to tread, never counting the cost, as though their refusal to count made the reckoning less.

Would it were possible to notice seriatim the essays chosen with so much discrimination; but that is not possible. Old friends many of them are, awakening memories of what instinctively one designates as "the good old days". In the article entitled *What of Phenomena?* one is reminded of the discussion which raged among members of the T.S. around the "manifestations" of H.P.B. *Psychic and Nöetic Action* which first appeared in October and November 1890 is an invaluable essay for the serious student; while in the dialogue between H. P. B. and Mabel Collins, at the time co-editor of *Lucifer*, abound many helpful hints for those who care to ponder them. Running, however, through the entire collection, like the theme of a musical composition, is the exhortation that the enquirer should study the philosophy of occultism before attempting the task of practical training.

For those who consider sympathetically the hints and warnings conveyed in the course of these twelve articles, instruction and illumination are available in a degree proportionate to the sincerity of the student. Armed with the knowledge of what constitutes true occultism, the sincere Theosophist should find it possible to avoid many pitfalls, and what better counsel could he have than that of H.P.B. herself? In the guise of Occultism any practices of a psychic nature are advocated as a sure and ready means of "obtaining results". Where these are not actually harmful to the unwary student who personally applies them, they are at least misleading and, from the spiritual point of view, a waste of time. With a guide such as that afforded by the counsel of H.P.B. it should be possible for every student to discriminate unerringly between the psychic and the spiritual. Indeed the writer of the Preface to this work makes no vain boast in claiming that "every article in this volume contains priceless instruction". To those who approach the subject in the proper frame of mind *Raja-Yoga or Occultism* is rich in spiritual wealth—and spiritual wealth is beyond all price.

HENRY J. STRUTTON

[Our reviewer is the editor of the well-known *Occult Review*.—EDS.]

Prometheus and Epimetheus, A Prose Epic. By CARL SPITTELER, translated by James F. Muirhead, M. A., L. H. D. (Jarrolds, London.)

The legend of Prometheus is the grandest of ancient myths. Its origin in the East, the appeal it has consistently made through the ages, and the nobility of thought and language it has produced, from Æschylus to Shelley, emphasise its supreme significance. Carl Spitteler, the German-Swiss epic poet,

who died in 1924, so felt the force of the Promethean myth that he used it as the theme of his first and last major works, despite the interval of nearly forty-five years. *Prometheus and Epimetheus*, a long prose poem, is the earlier of these two, and it is not too much to say that it alone must place Spitteler on an equal footing with the greatest authors whom the legend has inspired. It has been truly said that Spitteler is the greatest epic poet since Milton.

The inner meaning of the story of Prometheus is, of course, the winning for Man of the divine fire from Heaven, giving him spiritual perceptions and enabling him to be the master of his own evolution. It is finely described by H. P. Blavatsky—who in *The Secret Doctrine* (Vol. II. pp. 411–422) has given us the most comprehensive and reliable analysis of the Promethean myth—as pointing to "the last of the mysteries of cyclic transformations, . . . from the ethereal to the solid physical state, from spiritual to physiological procreation" (*S. D.* II. 415); and she further clarifies its import by the following:—"The Host that incarnated in a portion of humanity. . . . . preferred free-will to passive slavery, intellectual self-conscious pain and even torture. . . . . to inane, imbecile, instinctual beatitude." (*S. D.* II. 421.) The torments of Prometheus are in himself, and are the consequences of his own spiritual independence.

Spitteler the philosopher is deeply conscious of the vital significance of his theme, but he speaks only through Spitteler the poet. The beauty of word images, the entrancing flow of the epical story, have the quality and enchantment that only true poetry can offer; but for the reader who sees beneath symbols there is rich philosophy waiting to be plucked by the wayside. Spitteler symbolises and personifies everything. A cloud talks with its shadow, a worm of regret crawls at midnight out of the dark grave, the lion of pride is Prometheus's boon comrade. His thoughts are insects which, when they notice his slackened will, begin to whizz and buzz about him, blustering and shrilling in a hateful and hundred-voiced song. Pandora's treasure is now a child, now a jewel, now a kind of animal. Spitteler's mind is so truly poetical that it leaps to the image first, and to the feeling or act it personifies only second. And, as Spitteler himself said, "If you find these scenes beautiful you have understood them."

One brief sample of his style must be quoted. It tells of the last of Pandora's treasure, which the race of men have discarded as hateful rubbish beneath a bush:

> And now the whole countryside was empty and lonely, while the birds twittered dreamily in the trees. And the only face to be seen in the whole round ball of the world was that of the Sun, who, with half-closed eyes, was dozing on the soft rug of his chariot, in order to refresh his graceful limbs. And, the while, his noble horses jogged along through the hot and shadeless ether.
>
> Then a boy appeared, crawling slowly over the brown fields, plodding with effort over the low furrows, because his footsteps were stained with red blood.
>
> Yet he uttered no complaint and shed no tears. But when, after a long and painful hour, he reached the low bush beneath the apple tree,
>
> He threw himself passionately on the ground, crying and sobbing, like one who has lost the whole world, like one in whose heart a nameless chord has snapped.

The enjoyment of fine lyrical or epic poetry, especially from a poet who deserves a wide public through translation for English-speaking peoples, is enormously increased when it has an inner meaning apparent to the thoughtful. The present translation will enable many who perhaps know the Promethean myth well only from its analysis in *The Secret Doctrine* to see it set forth in all the fullness and force of its human message, perhaps with occasional irony, yet in the guise of splendid, heart-stirring, biblical language—undoubtedly the finest epic poetry of these latter years.

G. W. W.

From Orpheus to Paul. By VITTORIO D. MACCHIORO (Henry Holt and Company, New York. $ 3.00)

This book deals with the history of Orphism, and contains the Schermerhorn Lectures in Religion delivered by the author during the winter of 1929 at Columbia University. As a curator of the Royal Museum of Naples and a professor in the University of Naples, and as one who has lived for many years among the historic relics of the Orphic cults, Dr. Macchioro is eminently qualified to give an account of that important phase of Greek mysticism which is so often misunderstood and misinterpreted. The main thesis of the author centres round two fundamental ideas, namely, the primitive character and the distinctiveness of the Orphic cult. Hence the first five chapters of the book are devoted to a discussion of the principal features of Orphism, such as the collective ecstasy, the collective communion, the spiritual rebirth etc., as evidences of their origin in primitive mentality. The next four chapters contain a clear presentation of the distinctive traits of the sect. Dr. Macchioro takes his reader through the three important stages in the conquest of Greece by this Orphic cult. While the early struggles of Orphism against the Greek State religion, its endeavours to gain control of Greek culture and the methods it adopted to carry the fight to its final success mark the first period, its career of conquests,—cultural and religious,—and its contribution to the Pythagorean, Heraclitean and Platonic philosophies, characterize the second period of its history. And finally, the reader is taken through the third period where he becomes familiar with the part played by Orphism in the making of Paulinism and the contributions made by it to the success of Christianity in southern Europe.

While each chapter has its distinctive historical value, the most attractive part of the book is the author's defence of his position that Orphism, far from being a constructive element in the history of Greek religion, was, in fact, an unconscious foe of the religion of the Greeks, in that it was thoroughly alien to the spirit and genius of the people. This is contrary to the view that the history of Orphism is merely an aspect of Greek thought. In support of his position that Orphism is a separate cult which originally stood in sharp opposition to the classic religion of the Greeks, the author first seeks to prove that Orphism is alien to Greek thought by tracing its origin to an outside source. From the point of view of their origins, religions may be divided into two great categories: natural or spontaneous religions and doctrinal or revealed religions. Religions which have had a natural growth, such as fetishism, animism, polytheism, belong to the first group. And such religions as Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, which have been founded by a historical person, fall under the second class. The latter differs from the former in three important respects. In the first place, a revealed religion has a founder; secondly, it possesses a sacred book; and thirdly it has an accepted system of theology. Inasmuch as Orphism possesses all these three essentials, the author maintains that it naturally falls under the class of doctrinal or revealed religions. It is significant that these three essentials are conspicuous by their absence in all Greek religions. The religion of the Greek has no founder, no source book of authority and no system of dogmas.

A study of the history of Orphism from this point of view leads the author to the conclusion that it was a religion whose origin, beliefs and history had nothing whatever in common with Greek religions. In fact, his investigation forces him to maintain that the whole history of Orphism points to something quite foreign to the Greek genius. If Orphism was so alien to the Greek outlook on religion and yet exerted so profound an influence on Greek thought, it is then pertinent to ask: Where did this cult come from? Whether the answer to this question offered by the author would satisfy a critical mind or not, it must be said to the credit of Dr. Macchioro that he does make an effort to find a way

out. First he is led to assume that Orphism was a primitive or ecstatic religion founded by some shaman or medicine man, whom later tradition named Orpheus. His assumption seems to be based on some resemblances which obtain between the ghost religion and Orphism. However, the high code of morals involved does not let him rest there in peace. Dr. Macchioro is therefore led to wonder next if the cult could not be better compared with primitive Judaism. Not finding even this quite satisfactory, he seeks an explanation in the close connection of Orphism with the worship of Dionysus. Like Orphism, the Dionysiac religion also was alien to Greek habits of mind. While this religion, for instance, claims immortality for the human soul, the Homeric eschatology denies it. It is no wonder then if the Homeric poems regarded this cult of Dionysus as a foreign religion not congenial to Greek society. Since ecstasy and frenzy which, though unknown to the Homeric religion, were customary in Thrace, it seems natural to the author that a Thracian origin should be attributed to the Dionysiac religion. And from the fact that Orphism was closely connected with this religion, Dr. Macchioro concludes that not only Orphism and its founder were not at all Greek but that they most probably were of Thracian origin.

That the Orphic cult is alien to Greek genius is admitted on all hands, but the author while he seeks to find its source of origin by tracing its primitive traits, does not, it seems to me, make a serious effort to discover its genesis by tracing its philosophical and theological characteristics to the sources of their origin. He does, of course, devote a whole chapter to a discussion of the influence of Orphism on Greek philosophy but in tracing their relationship he does not seem to go far enough. For instance, the author denies that Orphism and Pythagoreanism are one and the same thing, but admits that there is a real identity between them in regard to certain religious beliefs. Many Western scholars now admit that a great similarity exists between the Pythagorean philosophy and Indian wisdom. If Orphism is like Pythagoreanism in some of its features, then may not these common characteristics be due to a common source,—influences from India? It is this aspect of the question that is left altogether untouched in the research work of the author. The system of Orpheus is a system of the purest morality. And its teachings, such as severe asceticism, voluntary poverty, and justification by sacrifices and incantations were certainly at variance with the Greek way of life. Further, this sect believed not only in the eternity, immortality and divinity but also in the transmigration of souls. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the Orphic Brotherhood abstained from animal food, wore white linen garments and had many ceremonies and practices similar to those of some religious sects in India. It seems extraordinary that these striking features and peculiar ways of the sect,—so unlike the Semitic or Hellenic but so like those of the sects of India,—did not suggest to the learned professor the possibility of an Indian origin of the Orphic cult. Since Orphism had its origin about 600 B. C.,—the very period when the Ionian philosophers were so considerably influenced by Indian thought and life,—one wonders whether an investigation in that direction as to the origin of the Orphic cult would not be more fruitful. If the author had carried his research a little further and explored Indian sources, his work, I am inclined to believe, might have been a valuable contribution to the study of Comparative Religion.

JAGADISAN M. KUMARAPPA

The Holy Kabbalah. By A. E. WAITE. (Williams & Norgate, Ltd., London. 30*s.*)

One's first impression on receiving this large well-produced volume is that of pleasant surprise that Mr. Waite—student of religion, mysticism, masonry, magic, and hidden lore and legend—should have yet another big volume to offer to the world after nearly half a century of research, and the publication of something like the same number of volumes. It was in 1886 that *Mysteries of Magic* was published, to become, for many years, a kind of standing dish among the wide, and widely scattered, circle of readers who were, some seriously, others curiously, inquiring into the strange philosophy, or speculation, or religion that was first discussed in London drawing-rooms and Indian bungalows under the name of Esoteric Buddhism. Mr. Waite has travelled far since those days, adventured into many arid places and some mayavic swamps, but he has kept the goal ever in view and the results of his quests have enriched many private and public libraries with material valuable to posterity, as well as to his contemporaries for whom he has cleared and straightened up a good many jungles of literary superstition and legend.

In some sense it may be said he has ploughed a lonely furrow. He has never been a prominent figure of the coterie or the platform; he has never had a gospel to preach for, he is essentially the mystic—not of the emotional type, his critical faculty is too well developed for that—and in the book now before us there lies ample demonstration of the fact in the revision and modification of statements and judgments which found place in the two earlier works, now out of print, which for all practical purposes have been re-issued in this volume. These are *The Doctrine and Literature of the Kabbalah* and *The Secret Doctrine in Israel*: the first dates from 1902 and the other from 1913, and Mr. Waite has in the interval traversed other fields of investigation but returns to Jewish Mysticism, as to an old love, in the conviction that herein is to be traced one important channel of the mystical tradition from early human history that is of vital interest to the true theosophist. Mr. Waite believes in a Secret Doctrine of Religion. His anxiety is to refine the gold of truth from the dross of superstition. "If," he writes, "I have had in the course of inquiry to reduce various illusions to their proper place in the realm of the fantastic, and have contracted the sphere of what is called Mysticism within its proper dimensions, I shall be justified as far as regards my intention by those whom I have sought to disabuse."

The work is addressed then not to Jewry, nor primarily as a contribution to scholarship, though it fills an important gap in the literature of Kabbalism in England, but rather it is part of a larger scheme, long resolved by the author, for an exploration of the traces of the Secret Tradition in Christian times and the determination of the vital question of the existence of a real Science of the Soul which can be freed from veilings and accretions and be recognisable as of the nature of the same quest as that of Catholic Mysticism. So then he finds that at their best and highest the "Sons of the Doctrine"—the old Kabbalists—were not without an inward realisation of a great reality, which they expressed outwardly as the "Bond of Union". If this reality exists the question of the age of records—the antiquity of Kabbalistic tradition—is only of consequence historically. Fundamentally if the truth is there it matters not if it be hoary with 700 or 7000 years.

The range of the work now under review embodies not only the material of the two books already named but also revisions and additions such as we should anticipate as the result of further research and consideration. The plan divides the volume into twelve books of which the first four treat of the literature of the Kabbalah and its history; the fifth to the eighth books embody the doctrine in respect of *God and the Universe; Spiritual hierarchies; the ways of God with man*, following the Old Testament tradition; and the *Higher Secret Doctrine*, which divides into

the *Mystery of Shekinah* and the *Mystery of Sex*. The ninth and tenth books revert to the "written word"—the first dealing with the medieval expositors and commentators on the Zohar; the second with some Christian students of the Kabbalah—a selection ranging from Raymond Lully to Eliphas Lévi and the modern French School. This division includes two short sections treating respectively of the Kabbalah and Esoteric Christianity, or, in other words, Anna Kingsford's well-known book *The Perfect Way*—and of the Kabbalah and Modern Theosophy. It may be conceived that to both these sub-sections some readers of THE ARYAN PATH will turn with special interest: whether they will be pleased or repelled by Mr. Waite's restrained but somewhat pointed criticisms depends in part on their own preconceptions, or cherished beliefs, and in part on their types of mind—but they should be read and weighed in the light of the motto which graces the title-page of Mme. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* "Satyât nâsti paro Dharmah," and possibly the conclusion will be that Mr. Waite might also have been justified in adopting for *his* title-page Montaigne's "Cecy est un livre de bonne Foy." which appears on that of *Isis Unveiled*.

Book eleven treats of the Kabbalah and other channels of Secret Tradition and one has only to recite the titles of its six sub-divisions—*i.e.*, the Kabbalah and Magic; Alchemy; Astrology; Free-Masonry; the Tarot and Mysticism—to excite the interest of many of our readers. Lastly, book twelve embodies some "final considerations" such as the developments of later Kabbalism, which is a return to literary criticism, and the alleged Christian elements of which, at some length, Mr. Waite disposes, as we think, effectually.

Summing up in a conclusion on Jewish Theosophy, Mr. Waite reverts to the subject matter of book eight. That no misunderstanding may be due to misapprehension on the part of the reviewer, here is the Author's own "argument" introducing this section:—

> The Secret Doctrine of the Zohar concerning the Holy Shekinah is the Mystery of Sex at its highest and she herself is the Mystery of the Oral Law. It is intimated that behind this Mystery there appears to be an authentic doctrine of Knowledge, based on experience. We are led on in this manner to a more particular study of the Mystery of Sex in the light of the Secret Tradition, and there is a sense in which it is still a study of Shekinah. It is suggested that there is or may be a Mystery of Human Nuptials behind it which has not been conceived by the heart of man in ordinary ways of life.

And in his conclusion Mr. Waite writes:—

> But I do believe that in the expounded Mystery of Sex—so far as it is indeed expounded—it suggests a great experiment which—"once in time and somewhere in the world"—may have been practised . . . It follows in fine therefore that SEPHER HA ZOHAR, the BOOK OF SPLENDOUR, has something to tell us at this day which calls to be heard by those who have ears. God preventing, I do not affirm that it offers an only way, since ways are many to the height. From the beginning of things He has called men and women in all the states of life, in childhood and virginity, in espousals and widowhood; and He who makes all things one has called the Lover and the Beloved, that they may go up hand in hand and become one in Him.

The Secret Doctrine of Israel is not milk for babes. Mr. Waite comparing it with the literature of Alchemy, of the Holy Graal, of Rosicrucianism and of speculative Masonry finds its distinctive characteristic in the fact that it concerns a mystery of sex summarised as the mystical body of Shekinah, while it includes the shadows and outlines of a science of perfection, and that it is "in living concurrence with the other witnesses". Amid all the degradation which has come to surround that central fact of humanity's existence as a race it is not an easy task to adumbrate for the modern mind the true bearing of a Mystery of Sex. Misunderstanding is fatally easy, yet, if we do not mistake, it would seem as if these Sons of a Chosen Race were following a true path, even if with stumbling footsteps, and that some of the worst evils humanity suffers to-day might disappear, and the birth of a less inglorious race be assured, if some dim realisation of the meaning of spiritual eugenics might illumine the social darkness of to-day.

The foregoing paragraph was written in 1914 and there seems no reason to modify the opinion then expressed. During sixteen intervening years much water has run under the bridge and the whole subject of sexual relations has developed an importance in the public mind, and been discussed with an unreserve in which it is not by any means always easy to recognise the scientific temperament, nor yet the religious spirit, though discussion flows vigorously along the channels of orthodox religion. Mr. Waite's sincerity we cannot question, but the slimy connotations which too often have clouded and polluted the subject, in literature and in life, make it one requiring exceptionally cautious and even reverent treatment. The author seems to us to have brought these conditions to bear and we wish his book no better fate than to receive the understanding of sincere and reverent readers.

EDITH WARD

[We will permit ourselves only one extract from *The Secret Doctrine* of H. P. BLAVATSKY to enlighten the above interesting review. —EDS.]

Creative powers in man were the gift of divine wisdom, not the result of sin. This is clearly instanced in the paradoxical behaviour of Jehovah, who first *curses* Adam and Eve (or Humanity) for the supposed committed crime, and then *blesses* his "chosen people" by saying "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth" (*Gen. ix.* 1). The curse was not brought on mankind by the Fourth Race, for the comparatively sinless Third Race, the still more gigantic Antediluvians, had perished in the same way; hence the Deluge was no punishment, but simply a result of a periodical and geological law. Nor was the curse of KARMA called down upon them for seeking *natural* union, as all the mindless animal-world does in its proper seasons; but, for abusing the creative power, for desecrating the divine gift, and wasting the life-essence for no purpose except bestial personal gratification. When understood, the third chapter of Genesis will be found to refer to the Adam and Eve of the closing Third and the commencing Fourth Races. In the beginning, conception was as easy for woman as it was for all animal creation. Nature had never intended that woman should bring forth her young ones "in sorrow." Since that period, however, during the evolution of the Fourth Race, there came enmity between its seed, and the "Serpent's" seed, the seed or product of *Karma* and divine wisdom. For the seed of woman or lust, *bruised the head* of the seed of *the fruit of wisdom and knowledge*, by turning the holy mystery of procreation into animal gratification; hence the law of Karma "bruised the *heel*" of the Atlantean race, by gradually changing physiologically, morally, physically, and mentally, the whole nature of the Fourth Race of mankind. How wise and grand, how far-seeing and morally beneficent are the laws of Manu on connubial life, when compared with the licence tacitly allowed to man in civilized countries. That those laws have been neglected for the last two millenniums does not prevent us from admiring their forethought. The Brahmin was a *grihastha*, a family man, till a certain period of his life, when, after begetting a son, he broke with married life and became a chaste Yogi. His very connubial life was regulated by his Brahmin astrologer in accordance with his nature. Therefore, in such countries as the Punjab, for instance, where the lethal influence of Mussulman, and later on of European, licentiousness, has hardly touched the orthodox Aryan castes, one still finds the finest men—so far as stature and physical strength go—on the whole globe; whereas the mighty men of old have found themselves replaced in the Deccan, and especially in Bengal, by men whose generation becomes with every century (and almost with every year) dwarfed and weakened. . . .

Mankind, having passed from the ethereal to the solid physical state, from spiritual to physiological procreation, is now carried onward on the opposite arc of the cycle, toward that second

phase of its primitive state, when *woman knew no man*, and human progeny *was created, not begotten.*

That state will return to it and to the world at large, when the latter shall discover and really appreciate the truths which underlie this vast problem of sex. It will be like "the light that never shone on sea or land," and has to come to men through the Theosophical Society. That light will lead on and up to the *true spiritual intuition.* Then (as expressed once in a letter to a theosophist), "the world *will have a race of Buddhas and Christs*, for the world will have discovered that individuals *have it in their own powers to procreate Buddha-like children—or demons.*" "When that knowledge comes, all dogmatic religions, and with these the demons, will die out." (Vol. II, 410,15.)

The Franciscan Adventure. By VIDA DUTTON SCUDDER. (J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., London. 15*s.*)

The similarity of the life cycle of the Franciscan group to that of every other movement whose motive force is the fellowship of man, is seen in this skilful, vivid record, which traces the awakening of the seed in the ground already ripe, the early joyous struggles, the fatal phase of popularity, when the group outgrew its strength, so that the soul grew dim while the corporate body waxed stronger; thence to attempts by sincere but less clear-visioned followers to interpret spiritual paradox in terms of material compromise, leading thus to alteration and reversal of the original tenets; and so downward, on the one hand to jog-trot indifference, and on the other to dissension, fanaticism, persecution and decay.

Miss Scudder analyses the past achievement and defeat, and the future promise of the movement, in the application of its principles to the social problems of to-day. The friars' tenderness and unconventionality helped to free people from the old formalities, the heart of the matter, according to Miss Scudder, being the Franciscan attitude to personal possessions and the higher powers of character,—renunciation of the first leading to the acquisition of the second; but the movement failed because of the "partial application and the limitation of its scope to the few," and while the present time is ripe for a revival of the Franciscan ideal, "it can never be realized in a civilization based on unchecked right to private property".

But that ideal, or Miss Scudder's interpretation of it, has also an incomplete basis. Mere material relinquishment of possessions will not lead to brotherhood while body, mind and desires are equally private property. False renunciation, beginning with externals, leads to selfishness, a point corroborated by this record. Man is a spiritual being, working from within without, and cannot be reformed from outside as Miss Scudder seems to hope, despite her own statement that a psychological transformation is the first requisite. With universal, impersonal vision, true renunciation of property and right use of property are no longer seen as different.

The author's perplexity, as well as the reader's understanding, would be helped by carrying into the mental outlook "the sense of the Whole! Only healing for our social ills. Evil inheres in the partial, the divided; where shall the cure for evil be sought except in unity?"

W.W.

CORRESPONDENCE

BANSHEES

In a country with such scenery as one encounters in Ireland, scenery that is sometimes wildly beautiful but more often, perhaps, depressing in its sense of extreme solitude and sadness, it is not altogether surprizing to find credulity in phantasms that harmonize both with the natural surroundings and the atmosphere. These phantasms are popularly known as Banshees. The word Banshee is apparently a contraction of the Irish "Bean Sidhe," variously translated "The woman of the Barrow," "The lady of death," "The woman of sorrow," "A woman of the fairy race". Banshees are spirit entities associated with the old races of Ireland, that invariably, when materialized, assume the guise of women. By old races I mean those people whose forebears were inhabitants of Ireland prior to the coming to Ireland of the Anglo-Normans and Welsh in the twelfth century, A. D. Though a Banshee may be heard and seen by people who are not of such Irish descent, it is only when they are in the company of someone who has such a strain of blood in their veins. Banshees are strictly racial, though not confined to Ireland. They follow the fortunes of the particular family they haunt—for some peculiar reason they have attached themselves to certain families—no matter where those families roam.

Hence Banshees are seen and heard outside Ireland, in America, Spain and other countries where Irishmen have settled, more often, perhaps, to-day than they are seen and heard on Irish soil. No one knows the origin of Banshees. It is generally agreed, however, by such authorities on ghost and fairy lore as Sir Walter Scott, Pierse Ferriter and McAnnaly that they date back to very remote ages, probably to prehistoric times. For my own part I doubt if they are the spirits of people who have ever inhabited material bodies. I am more inclined to believe they belong to a species, call them ghosts, fairies, elementals or what you will, that are quite distinct and apart from the human race, albeit for some strange reason they take a special interest in those who are of ancient Irish lineage. In appearance they vary very much. In the case of the O'Neills of Shane Castle, the O'Briens of Thomond, and certain other families the Banshee is in the form of a very beautiful girl with red gold hair and large blue or grey eyes.

Usually she is clad in a green garment. In other families she is old and haggish and dressed in black, witch-like. In other families, again, she is lovely but nude or clad in garments of hues other than green or black. Banshees are invariably the harbingers of misfortune, generally of death. The death of a member of the family to which they are attached. This member, as a rule, is unaware of their presence. Their manner of demonstrating their advent differs very much. Some Banshees wail and moan, some clap their hands, some laugh, and some just sigh or are alarmingly silent. Sometimes they are seen, sometimes only heard, sometimes both seen and heard. The clan to which I belong claiming Milesian descent (the poetical name for Ireland, by the way, is "daughter of O'Donnell") we consequently have attached to us various Banshees that have been written about and described by many Irish authors.

Prior to the death of my father—he was murdered in a very dastardly fashion by Europeans at Arkiko, Red Sea Coast—and the death of my mother several years later, a Banshee was heard wailing inside and outside the house we occupied in Ireland. I did not hear it, I was but a child in the nursery, but I heard it, years later, immediately before the death of my uncle, who was head of our branch of the family. What happened was this:—One night, in midsummer I was lying awake, thinking of nothing in particular, when my dog in the garden began to bark furiously and then to whine

in a way that was altogether unusual. Wondering what was the matter I was about to get up, when there was a series of the most unearthly cries and moans that seemed to proceed from the hall. (I was on the first floor. There were only two storeys.) I say unearthly because, although the cries were in a measure human, I could detect, every now and then, distinct, though to me unintelligible, words in an apparent woman's voice; there was, at the same time, something terribly eerie and unnatural about them. Something I had never experienced before. If I can liken the cries to anything earthly at all, I should say they most nearly resembled a woman in the direst physical or mental anguish. My wife who was awake heard them, too, and at her request I got up at once and went on to the landing, where I found every other inmate of the house. They were standing in a group, obviously badly scared and greatly mystified. The cries continued for some minutes and then left off, to recommence shortly afterwards under one of the bedroom windows. We all ran to the window and peered out, but could see no one, although it was a very bright moonlight night. I then went into the garden and searched everywhere, my dog refusing to accompany me. It lay crouching on the ground, occasionally whining and shivering. I could discover nothing that would account for the sounds which still went on, but I was very conscious of some uncanny presence. After a while the cries and groaning grew feebler and continued doing so till, finally, they ceased. Directly that happened my dog got up, sniffed the air, and walked about the garden not as usual but with its tail rather between its legs. The following day I received a wire saying my uncle was dead. He had died about three o'clock in the morning. It was about one o'clock when we heard the Banshee.

Though attempts have sometimes been made to get into communication with a Banshee, no one, on anything like evidential testimony, has succeeded, and consequently this strange entity is still wholly enigmatical. The idea, as propounded by certain writers who are not old Irish and who have no first hand experience of this national phenomenon, that it is merely a thought-form is sheer rubbish.

The Banshee is an objective superphysical entity. Not only can it make itself seen and heard, but it is, as I have said, prophetic. More than that, it can open and shut doors and behave in a manner impossible in a mere thought-form. Families who possess a Banshee, and they are not legion, though they dread its advent, would not be without it, for there is something indescribably fascinating about it, something that makes one want to say most fervently "Thank God I am old Irish, real Irish".

ELLIOTT O'DONNELL

[ELLIOTT O'DONNELL is well known as author of ghost stories, and of books on abnormal psychic experiences.—EDS.]

THE CINEMA AS THE MATERIALIZATION OF THE HUMAN MIND AND SPIRIT

The Cinema is a Machine for seeing—I mean seeing in the physical sense. It offers nothing to vision or the intellectual power. It does not initiate into spiritual truth. It neither inspires nor purifies nor refines. It is the outcome of a Machine Age. It is fitted for its particular purpose, the portrayal of material objects and agents, and the symbols of a machine-made civilisation. It is capable in proper hands of becoming an organic part of a machine-made community, as in Soviet Russia, and of serving the community. Till recently it has been, however, part of a vast Money-production machine. The evil achieved by it is considerable. It has pandered to the vilest appetites. It has profaned the noblest emotions, in particular, Love. It has exhibited a dunghill composed of sex, war and crime. And for self-discipline and self-control, it has substituted senseless and shapeless impulses, feelings and sentiments. Can anything then worthy of the name of spiritual proceed from such a machine? I feel inclined to doubt it. At all events during my exploration of the Cinema in

Cinema countries at wartime and after I gathered abundant evidence of the guilt of the Cinema in materialising the human mind and spirit.

Present space permits me to offer evidence of guilt drawn only from after-war countries. I may conveniently consider this under two heads; the conscious and unconscious materialisation of mind and spirit. By conscious, I mean the intentional use of the Cinema for the purpose of materalising the mind of the community. By unconscious, the exhibition of a picture that unintentionally contains materialising factors into which the audience can read its state of mind produced by struggle and disaster.

Two excellent examples of the intentional use of the Cinema occur in Soviet Russia and Germany. The Soviet Cinema affords the finest example of the power of the Cinema to act as a mechanical and materialising agent. The Soviet Government have never made the slightest attempt to regard the Cinema otherwise than as a powerful materialising agent. From the first they have been compelled so to regard it by their materialistic conception of the State and Society, and by their conception of the Theatre and Cinema as social manifestations. Together these instruments of interpretation and reproduction have all along been made the framework for the material image into which the Russian people under the Bolshevist system of Government is being transformed. The task of the Cinema was an easy one. All it had to do was to portray a Machine Age of which it was the outcome and a part; and the mechanistic development of a new Society. Practically it had to portray a mass of workers hounded to revolution by mis-government, repression, war, starvation and political and economic chaos; attaining power invested in a communist Government, presented with a new conception of a new dispensation, called a Workers' Republic; fighting for life against enemies within and without the Republic; striving to construct a national machine or organisation according to the materialistic interpretation of Marx and Lenin; and building up a machine-made civilisation according to the Five Years Plan which, in pursuit of a Workers' Industrial State, has taken a path paved with machines.

So the Soviet Cinema has come to portray mechanical and materialist symbols, material and materialised emotions,—emotions bred of class-war, of a worldly memory and aspiration. Likewise to exhibit pictures that ridicule the religion, the social and cultural aspiration of the old order of society, and glorify the mechanistic and materialist aspiration of the new. Hence its historical, recapitulation and reconstruction pictures that portray the worker as slave; then as slave awaking; then as slave awakened, throwing off the shackles of the old order of society; and then to-day, the slave as master moulding a materialistic civilisation and culture. Such themes appear in particular in Potemkin, The Last Days of St. Petersburg, The General Line, Earth, Turk Sib (in which a new railroad is the hero struggling to save the country from economic disaster).

The Soviet Cinema then portrays the bigger struggle between Life and Death—a struggle from which all spiritual factors have been removed. The German Cinema, since the War, has likewise been organised to portray the eternal struggle between Life and Death, but with the difference that whereas the Soviet Cinema would admit no "soul" the German Cinema has glanced toward "soul" without however being able to admit it. That is to say, the German Fight for Life has been associated with such terms as soul, spirit, spiritualisation. The traditional German spirit found in the old German philosophies and culture has been invoked to aid Germany in maintaining the patriotic devotion of its own people and to win sympathy from foreign peoples. But the spirit has never entered the Cinema. Though the works of great German philosophers like Goethe, and the activities of great religious reformers like Luther, have been made the subject of pictures, in, for instance,

Faust and Martin Luther, the basic emotions portrayed were merely materialised ones.

About 1919 there was a proposal by the Picture Production Magnates to put the German "soul" into the pictures with the aid of the young revolutionist artists, who, having been deeply touched by the War, were burning to have a finger in the new dispensation. The proposal was praiseworthy. For obvious reasons it could not lead to much.

So two elements entered into the composition of German pictures. There was the commercial element put there by the Magnates who sought to exploit the needs of the public aroused by crisis after crisis, and to make money by doing so. Every crisis had its commercial value. The French invasion of the Ruhr called forth pictures of the Rhine and Nibelung type, which, while intended to strengthen public resistance against French encroachment were intended also to repay with profit the high sums expended on their production.

Then there was the æsthetic element put there by the Expressionists who entered the Cinema at the invitation of the Magnates with the intention of putting "soul" or "spirit" into the pictures. This they were unable to do, for they had not the requisites for the execution of their high intent. As the Dr. Caligari and Golem and Mabuse type of pictures show, they had form and not content. In the first picture they were solely concerned with Space conceived of as a plastic material. I shall not stop to estimate the degree of soul caricature in the form provided by these æsthetes. On the whole their æsthetic form was as materialistic as the commercial content—a horrible study of insanity. By them, the picture was christened not christianised. The same may be said of most of the pictures that came to exhibit the mind of the studio artist,—cubist, futurist, expressionist, sur-realist, and the rest. They ruled out substance and appealed solely to worldlings attracted by surfaces.

Evidence of unconscious materialisation came from all parts of the War- and Revolution-stricken area, more especially from primitive communities. Such communities are apt to take the emotions awakened by horrible conditions and read them into the material objects of the screen from which of course they could derive no spiritual benefit. Their feeling might be of bitterness accompanied by a wish to continue the fight. The leading figure in the picture might be a spotless hero overcoming great odds by sheer physical strength, as in the best type of Western cowboy picture. The effect is to stimulate the audience to renewed exertion, but of a physical kind. The Cinema tells them that victory must come on wheels not on wings.

HUNTLY CARTER

[MR. CARTER has already written in our pages in December 1930, on "Drama the Organic Part of Human Life". He is the author of several interesting volumes on the drama and cinema, the latest of which is *The Cinema as the Materialization of the Human Mind and Spirit*.—Eds.]

ENDS AND SAYINGS

"————————*ends of verse*
And sayings of philosophers."

HUDIBRAS.

Not concerned with political moves and wire-pulling, we need not examine the conflicting causes which have led to the present saddening situation in India. The aftermath of the Round Table Conference has manifested itself in disappointment and uncertainty on the one hand, and on the other in the rule by Ordinances. It is not really important to ascertain if certain Congress leaders were right in talking about or even precipitating the Civil Disobedience Movement, or, on the other side, whether the Government had any justification for the course it has adopted. Rising superior to partisan feeling—by no means an easy task—we must try to look at the energies active in the invisible blood of all who are engaged in the struggle. The issues of the case are not red-shirts against machine guns, not no-rent campaigns against *lathis*. There is but one issue, and that is —who is to determine the kind of administration that India will have in the future? It is the outer and visible expression of the real invisible issue—shall ancient Asian or modern Western ideas and ideals prevail? Looked at in that light the whole problem assumes different proportions and a new value.

What are the vital results of the Round Table Conference?

India has gained substantially by showing the world that it has already produced leaders who are in every respect the equals of the flower of western statesmanship and diplomacy. The world has seen not only that in die-hardism a Shaukat Ali is no whit behind a Churchill; but also that in political acumen a Sapru is as good as a Reading; in sweet reasonableness and integrity in compromise a Sastri can score over a Sankey; in oratory a Malaviya can defeat a Macdonald. Above all, no Englishman at the Conference or in the United Kingdom rose to the height of Gandhiji in his intellectual simplicity and honesty, in his mystical practicality, in his intuitive insight, in his readiness to yield generously and claim in humble confidence all that he felt he could with justice. The world has now seen the great capacity of Indian publicists grouped together, and knows that there are numerous other equally talented minds in this vast peninsula.

On the other hand, India has lost substantially inasmuch as these publicists have failed in showing unity of purpose and programme. Certain Muslims and some others could not visualize

the good of the whole, their attention being fixed on separate communities and provinces. What was but a suspicion is now a clearly proven fact, and the world knows that all the love and sacrifice of Gandhiji could not overcome separatist tendencies. This failure has raised hopes among the opponents of the Congress and they are experimenting to see if that political body "doth possess the power or only pretendeth".

For a long while now India has felt, strongly maybe, but still it was only a feeling, that those who eat her salt in active service or in pensioned retirement are not only ranged against her but even wield an influence in Downing Street itself. This feeling has now become an experienced fact. The strength of this influence has been in evidence at the Round Table Conference, and its manipulative faculty is clearly to be discerned in the altered outlook of the hour which followed the change of government in England. That same influence must be seen at the back of the sudden and swift imprisonment of Congress leaders and organizers. The present official action may succeed in striking the hearts of the Congress supporters with terror; and it is possible that out of fear the Congress Movement may receive a set-back. But psychologists know that fear and hatred are twin aspects of one emotion, and what recedes under fear emerges later as hatred. It would be an interesting psychological problem to measure the wave-length of fear-energy flowing out of the suppressed activity of the Congress, into an insidious non-Congress programme, to emerge presently as hate-energy.

But there is the other aspect: Are the Indian people really steeped in the Gandhi philosophy and its socio-political programme? Their leaders in prison, and none left to advise and organize them, how many will eschew boycott-mentality and embrace Svadeshi soulfulness? How many will give up drink and adopt a pure Svadeshi life from inner conviction, even if the orange-saried Sevikas with their fair persuasion are absent? It may be that the very absence of leaders will give a new impetus to the Congress Movement, and the real, not nominal followers of Gandhiji may greatly increase in number. These may prepare themselves philosophically and psychologically for future action. Such a procedure would be watched with interest by the student of mysticism and Theosophy. If large numbers in India should do that, it would affect beneficently the thoughts of all who desire to better the state of civilization moving from within without.

With Gandhiji in gaol the question before every thoughtful Congressman is—in *what* lies preparation for India? The Westernized Native will answer —diplomacy and force, of which Russia is an example. The real Asia answers—SOUL-FORCE with which Krishna fought, Buddha triumphed and Jesus sacrificed.

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Printed by M. N. Kulkarni at the Karnatak Printing Press, 318A Thakurdwar, Bombay, and published by D. C. Townsend, Theosophy Company (India) Ltd., Bombay.